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CLASS

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No.

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LAW V.

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LAW XXVIII.

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LAW XXXI.

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the first of these is the fact that the system is not self-sufficient. It is dependent on the external world for its operation. This is a serious flaw in the system, and it is one which must be corrected if the system is to be of any use.

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VILLEROI

RELIGION FOUNDED ON PRINCIPLE, NOT ON
EXCITEMENT.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"THE VALLEY OF THE CLUSONE," ETC. ETC.

Thou tread'st upon enchanted ground,
Perils and snares beset thee round,
Beware of all, guard every part,
But most, the traitor in thy heart.

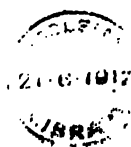
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VILLEROI.

CHAPTER I.

God doth not need

Either man's work, or his own gifts; who best
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best; his state
Is kingly, thousands at his bidding speed,
And post o'er land and ocean, without rest;
They also serve who only stand and wait.

MILTON.

It is well known that throughout England, and in many parts of the rest of the united empire, there are meetings held on the first Monday of every month, where Christians assemble to supplicate the Divine blessing upon missions, and to pray that the time may be hastened for the fulfilment of that promise, when the Lord "shall pour out of his Spirit upon all flesh," and "the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ."

It happened that on one of these occasions, in the handsome and populous town of Brighton, on the southern coast of England, a family were present of the name of Villeroi, descended from an ancient and respectable Hugonot of that name, who had escaped from France after the repeal of the edict of Nantes, and had found shelter on the hospitable shores of Great Britain.

Few persons in the town bore a higher, or more estimable reputation for piety and consistency of conduct, and for liberality of mind, than Mr. Villeroi. He possessed a considerable fortune, acquired by industry and commerce, and though, on principle, attached to the communion of the church of England, he regarded as brethren, all those who appeared to be true followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, and gave with a bounteous hand assistance to every work, which he thought conducive to the honor of his Master, or the interest of his government upon earth. Upon the occasion we have alluded to, Mr. Villeroi was present, with his wife and all his surviving children, a son and three daughters. The person who presided at this missionary meeting, and led the religious exercises, was a man of much animation and ability. He made a short but ardent address to the feelings of those present—upon the necessity of missionary exertions, upon the forward state of preparation in which many heathen nations seemed now to be for the reception of the good news, like “fields white to harvest”—and upon the lonely state of the reapers, who were

not in the proportion of one to twenty thousand souls. He then made a tender and affecting allusion to some who had laid down their lives in this blessed work—those who had ploughed up the soil, like Brainerd—faithful, persevering, heavenly-minded Brainerd! who had perished when scarcely the green shoot of the seed he had sown was beginning to appear: and him of kindred spirit, whom the Persians dignified with the title of an Elijah, “the man of God,” who had toiled and had suffered tribulation, and had kept the faith, even until death. And still later, the meek and exemplary Johnston, who had nurtured so long the infant churches of Sierra Leone, and watched over his charge, like a faithful shepherd, unmindful of the pestilential blast of its shores, till he became its victim. He proceeded, from a detail of their labours and their sufferings, to expatiate upon the glorious outline of the happiness of the saints, as contained in the word of God; of those, particularly, who had overcome temptation—“who had borne, and had patience, and, for his name’s sake, had laboured, and had not fainted—even, *to be made pillars in the temple of God, to go no more out; where he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them—where they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat, for the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.*”*

* Rev. ii, 3—iii, 12—vii, 15, &c.

Henry, the eldest son of Mr. Villeroi, a fine, animated, lad, of fifteen or sixteen years of age, was greatly struck with this address. With sanguine feelings, and a lively imagination, he caught up, rapidly, the glow of intense interest which a warm detail of circumstances like these, had a tendency to inspire; and he thought, within himself, nothing appeared so desirable as the life and labour of the missionary, combining in its sphere so many heroic virtues and sacrifices, and crowned at the end with such immortal victory. He compared in his own mind, the deeds of worldly heroes—of the Greek and Roman conquerors—the Alexanders—the Scipios—the Hannibals: or those crowned with more modern laurels—the imperial victor of Pavia, or the once invincible Swede, who “left a name at which the world grew pale.” How poor, how insignificant, did their motives and their actions appear, contrasted with the lowly missionaries, who, like their Master, were despised and rejected of men: who, instead of seeking worldly fame, incurred worldly contempt—instead of thirsting for men’s lives, earnestly sought to save them; and, instead of the perishing breath of human approbation, desired the honor which cometh from God only. Full of these thoughts and comparisons young Henry Villeroi returned home from the prayer-meeting that evening, excited too much, however, with new fancies and projects to be very communicative of them, as yet, to any one: indeed the next day he rather sought to be alone; and, had any one witnessed his secret *employments in his study*, he might have been seen

tracing with his finger, on a gigantic map of Asia, the various spots where the seed of eternal life was scattering from missionary hands—where Swartz had toiled in his prolonged usefulness—where Carey translated—where Martyn died. He imagined to himself the delight of treading in their steps, of reaping their harvest, of carrying on their work. In idea he conversed with, and convinced their Pundits, he felt no fatigue in translation, no languor from the climate; he followed to the Jhatra of Juggernaut, preached to the thousands, and imagined their desertion of the idol, and, transported by fancy, conceived himself, at once, possessed of all the talents, the zeal, the indefatigable love of souls, the heavenly-mindedness, and the crucified spirit of these eminent characters.

It could scarcely be expected, that a mind which was thus taking excursions to the farthest boundaries of the globe, and even laying out for itself the highest rewards of protracted martyrdom, could return, with much facility or willingness, to bear the little interruptions of common occurrences. While Henry was in the midst of his meditations a message was sent to him by a person who requested his immediate attention. Henry scarcely listened to the message. It was from a person whose name he knew, and to whom he had several times given pecuniary aid, but just now he did not scruple to send him word that he was too busy to speak to him at present. A short time afterwards, a little sister, about five years old, ran hurriedly into the room,

she pushed his map rather unceremoniously out of her way, in consequence of which the weights he had put on two of its corners fell off, the map curled up into its usual fold when not in use, and overturned an ink bottle, which he had inconsiderately laid on its surface, for the convenience of writing notes. This was certainly a very provoking accident; the poor little girl was frightened, and begged her brother's pardon: she was going to tell him the reason of her hurry, and what she wanted with him, but Henry was too much irritated to hear her: he sent her instantly out of the study, with an angry threatening air, and shut the door, fastening it inside, to prevent any new intrusion. How the accident which disturbed him was remedied, does not appear; but it is probable that his mind did not soon recover its tone, or return to the course his thoughts had been pursuing, with the same animation and interest as before.

On the evening of the day after the missionary meeting had been held, a party of friends met together at Mr. Villeroi's house. The elder persons who composed this party were collected in a group, engaged, it is hoped, in useful and serious discourse, while the younger people, and a few whose vivacity led them to prefer such society, separated themselves a little apart into another room, which was connected with the first by a large folding-door. Here, assembled round a large table, they soon fell into animated conversation upon the subjects with which they had been entertained the

preceding evening, and with the ardour of feeling natural to most young people, began to plan and imagine schemes for advancing the good of mankind; but, as is usual in such cases, their plans were chiefly of an impracticable nature, depending on circumstances over which they themselves had no control, or clogged with some impossible condition. One young lady, seemed to possess much of the energy requisite for a missionary character, and only wished that the feebleness of her sex, and its disability for enterprise, did not prevent her from immediately engaging herself in the work. Another lady said, she was sensible how important were foreign missions, but she considered that a great deal was yet to be done at home, and that if she was possessed of a large fortune she would immediately establish herself in some town or village where, by influence and example, she would be the means of introducing new habits and new manners among the people. For their temporal comfort she would establish manufactories and means of employment, in healthy situations, where the exertion should be exactly suited to the capability of every individual in her district, and where the price of labour should be liberal and impartial. She would furnish all the poor with comfortable dwellings, clothes, and furniture, prevent the establishment of public alehouses, and encourage schools, over which she would secure pious and consistent superintendants. Besides having an exemplary Christian minister, resident, she would herself go from house to

house to read the scriptures, instruct, exhort, and encourage—she would keep a table open every day at her house, where a plentiful dinner should be provided for the poor, the lame, the maim, and the blind, all of whom should be indiscriminately invited. Her own wardrobe, and the furniture of her house, should consist of the plainest and coarsest materials, and her whole property considered only as a loan from the Giver of all good gifts, to be spent for His glory and the benefit of her fellow creatures.

After this young lady, a grave-looking lad took up the subject, and said, that he thought he could be most useful, *if he were a bishop*, for he could then appoint, throughout his diocese, faithful and enlightened clergy, who would preach the Gospel in its purity, look diligently after their congregations, and set a holy example to all under their influence. Another desired to be a member of parliament, in which he said he could support and advance the claims of religion, whenever any subject connected with it was brought before the house, and that he might be so much the means of influencing government, that instead of the missionary society being as now supported by private contributions, it might become a national establishment. According to *his* views the foreign colonies subject to Great Britain, were committed to its charge chiefly for the purpose of being instructed in Christianity, through the medium of a constant intercourse. That, as a mere political measure it ought to be an important object with government to fulfil this design, for nothing

would be more likely to strengthen the power of British administration abroad, than to have all its possessions united under the same civil and religious responsibilities.

Henry Villeroi was by no means behind his companions in the warmth and energy of his expressions. He seemed led to look forward to the life of a foreign missionary as that in which he could do most good and most enjoy himself. He drew a lively picture of the value of the sacrifice a missionary makes when he quits his home, his friends, his country; but seemed to consider it light in comparison of the result—of being made the instrument of inducing thousands to cast away their idols and become servants of the cross.

A gentleman dressed in black, with a youthful and sweet countenance, who seemed to possess that happy kind of temperament which results from the union of natural liveliness with the habitual sobriety of a well-disciplined mind, had been listening for some time with much attention to the conversation which was passing. He now calmly observed, that as most of the pleasant schemes devised, were almost, or wholly, impracticable to the individuals by whom they were suggested, he thought it would lead to more useful conversation, if they would now consider what plans of doing good really lay within the compass of their ability, and make the inquiry whether they were indeed endeavouring to devote their time and talents to the glory of God and the good of their fellow men, in a degree propor-

tioned to their sphere of action. "For," he continued, "if we are truly and sincerely actuated by love to God and man, the feeling is already in operation at home, which would make us good missionaries abroad. If not, we are only indulging in idea the restless activity of human nature, which delights itself in being put forward and made of some consequence, the centre of a chain of causes and effects."

Some of the young people appeared a little startled and uncomfortable at these observations; they looked at one another doubtingly, and at length Henry Villeroi said, "But consider, my dear Sir, how extremely limited our opportunities are at home; we can do, comparatively, *nothing*. Our pulpits are already filled—our parishes attended to—many schools established—almost every one a nominal professing Christian, upon whose heart the work of conversion must be done by the Holy Spirit, for all the outward means are already in operation, and no human instrumentality can make them actually effective. But think of the glorious work of breaking up *new* ground, of planting the banner of the cross in the temples of Gunga, and on the minarets of the crescent!" The young gentleman in black, whom I shall call Mr. Leighton, smiled at the animation and zeal of Villeroi. "Far be it from me," said he, "to make light of the work of a missionary, or to discourage any young mind from thinking of its importance, or engaging in its duties, should it be the will of Almighty God to

point out such a path for him to follow. All I want, my dear young friends, is, that we may be prevented from deceiving ourselves, or trifling away our precious moments of action in idle speculation. You will, no doubt, admit that we cannot *all* be missionaries." "No, surely," replied Henry Villeroi, laughing, "I only want to be one, myself." "Nor," said Mr. Leighton, addressing himself to the benevolent young lady on his right hand, who had wished to possess a large fortune, that she might do extensive good with it, "can we all expect to be made rich." She shook her head. "And how many of us have a prospect of becoming right reverend fathers in the church?" "Not one of us, I am sure," answered several voices. "Or members of parliament?" There was a silence. "Well, my dear friends, then," resumed Leighton, "it is evident that an Allseeing Providence has arranged the several lots and conditions of men, dividing to each according to his wisdom. If we are therefore devising plans which are out of the order of that Providence, is it not evident we are going contrary to his will, overlooking the business he has given us to do, and thinking of that with which we have little concern? How do you think the Temple would have been built, if the different workmen, instead of attending to their own department, had been looking on at the others, wishing to exchange their employments, and fancying how much better they would perform that which they saw others engaged in, than their own particular work? If the mason had de-

spised his laborious drudgery of the hammer and the trowel, and had wished to be rather employed with the carpenter, fitting the floors and the roof; or if the carpenter had envied the carver of ornaments, and him who laid on the gold, and despised his own rough work, because it did not exhibit so much beauty and polish, how would the temple have advanced? No, they were far from thus acting; every man did *his own work*, and by that means a building was raised at which the nations wondered, and which, for beauty and durability, is a lively type of the spiritual temple, under which name the apostles designate the church of Christ. And in the erection of the wall of Jerusalem, there is a still more interesting illustration of the spirit in which we ought to submit to whatever duty is immediately before us, however unsuitable to our feelings or wishes, for we read that every man contributed his portion of labour by building up that part of the wall which lay directly opposite to him.*

“If this mode of reasoning were carried on,” answered Henry Villeroi, “where should we find missionaries? Where would have been the labours of Zeisberger, of Brainerd, and Martyn? They ought to have remained at home in the obscurity of their own villages, and the Heathen, of whose conversion they were the instruments, would have been exposed to perish!”

* Nehem. iii.

“I did not mean to affirm,” replied Leighton, “that so great a part of the Lord’s vineyard should be neglected; or that he has not labourers whose express calling it is to work therein; nor would I dare to say that it may not be his will to select some from this very circle, and call upon them to deny themselves and follow the blessed steps of those who went before in that thorny, but glorious path. He may be even now preparing some of our hearts for it; but it is impressed strongly on my mind, that we are not fit for any new duty, however vividly we may understand it or imagine we are equal to it, unless we are already endeavouring, to the utmost of our power, to fulfil that which is less remote. We may think our present duties are insignificant and below our attention, but how can we know whether we are capable of anything higher? The Lord may be trying us in a low sphere of action to prepare us for a greater. The servant, in the parable, was first put to the test whether he could be faithful in a few things, before he was made ruler over many.* Joseph’s strength and grace were exercised in the household of Potiphar, and in the care of prisoners in the dungeon, before he was made second in command under Pharaoh, over all the land of Egypt. Shall we suppose that if he had failed in the inferior duties of those subordinate stations, he would afterwards have been exalted to the high and important office which he filled so much to the advantage of the country, and

* Matt. xxv. 21.

the glory of that God whom to magnify had always been his first object. But besides his gradual advancement, there is another circumstance to be observed in the method by which the Lord trained him onward to a fitness for his work."

"You mean his previous sufferings," said Villeroi. "Yes. We observe he was first a cherished child in his father's house, knowing as little of himself perhaps as any of us do now of our own hearts. Being more wise for his age and more pious than his brethren, he probably thought himself just fit to be a ruler in the land of Egypt, or to fill any other great office, or to be a *missionary*."

"Oh," cried a little girl laughing, "there were no such things in those days!" "We don't know," replied Leighton, "there might not have been any persons absolutely professing this calling and laying themselves out for it as ours do; but we see in scripture many instances of individuals being required to confess the name of the true God, to stand up for his worship, and to declare his attributes to others in the midst of heathen idolaters, and sometimes at the peril of their lives. Such were Noah, Elijah, Daniel, the three children, and others."

"Well," returned Villeroi, "but about Joseph?" "It is not unlikely," said Leighton, "that his father's tenderness and partiality helped to increase his own good opinion of himself; and thus, he did not scruple to tell his brethren his dreams, though he must have known their purport would be mortifying to them. In the midst of this career of

vanity, however, the Lord had pity on Joseph; he saw he was a goodly plant, but that rank weeds were growing up about him; so he was transplanted, removed, at once, from the idolatrous love of his father, and the persecuting envy of his brothers, and thrown into the purifying furnace of affliction. Reuben describes the anguish of his soul at their cruel deed; he did not then see, it was his first step to promotion. This event helped to break his earthly ties; he had no longer a kind parent on whom to repose his griefs; he was cut off from all friendly society; he had but one consolation left—the *Lord was with him*. After this we see him again elevated a little: he was tried and found faithful; but the Lord had something yet better in store for him, and suffered him to be unjustly accused, and a second time thrown into the furnace. Here he gets a glimpse of hope, and again, for two full years, is disappointed, while the ungrateful butler, restored to office according to his prophecy, enjoys his own prosperity, and forgets his kind companion in sorrow. How gradual were the steps by which a loving Father exalted him, and restored, one by one, all he loved and cherished, to his desolated heart! Such, my dear friends, is only a single instance, though a lively one, of the preparatory process through which almost every child of God is brought, whom He intends to honor by any signal office in His service."

"But, few missionaries go through much trial until they are already engaged in their work," said Villeroi.

"True," returned Leighton, "but they should calculate on its being before them, and examine well whether they are supplied with the Christian's panoply, and whether it is *proof*, before they venture into that hazardous though glorious duty."

"We do not clearly understand you," said two young ladies who were listening attentively to what was passing, though they had not taken much part in the conversation.

Leighton drew from his pocket a little Testament, and, opening it at the 6th chapter of Ephesians, read as follows, from the 11th verse to the 18th:—
"*Put on the whole armour of God,*" &c. &c.

"Now," said he, "I conceive that though this advice applies to all Christians, more or less, it does in a most especial manner to those who are called upon to preach the word of God in foreign countries. We can be at no loss to comprehend the meaning of the figurative language used by the apostle. But when we think we have this armour in possession, let us prove it before we encounter a fierce warfare, even as David did before he ventured to meet Goliath; that is to say, let our faith, love, patience, meekness, forbearance, long-suffering, and firm continuance in well-doing, stand the test of ordinary occurrences, and home experience, before we rush into untried scenes of action."

Henry Villeroi sighed at this conclusion; it did not suit the blind enthusiasm of youthful zeal, but he was unable to controvert the reasoning. "As we are upon this subject," said he, at length, after a short pause, which nobody else seemed inclined

to break; "I think it may perhaps be entertaining to read you a poem which mamma pointed out to me, in a volume of select religious poetry, which she brought home yesterday; it was written by a person who had been reading the 7th chapter of Revelations, and whose mind was exalted into a temporary rapture, by contemplating the glorious view there pictured so sweetly, imagining he saw the patriarchs and prophets, martyrs and missionaries, of whom he had heard and read, mingling in that bloodwashed throng."

"Oh, pray, read it," was the general request. Henry rose immediately, and went to his mother's reading closet for the book, from which he read, with considerable interest and animation, the following poem:—

What did'st thou see? beloved John,
Apostle favored high,
(With whom conversed the Holy One,
In intimacy nigh,)
When in famed Patmos, from thy view,
His arm the future's veil withdrew,
And gave thee, for to venture through,
Inspiring energy?

What did'st thou see? Four angels stand,
With mighty wings prepared,
Furl'd—till unloosed the high command
Which bid them not be reared,
To hurt the earth; 'till far and wide
His seal had marked the Sanctified,
(The consecrate and mystic Bride,)
Thro' love redeeming, spared.

Oh ! what a seal was that which shone
On every radiant brow,
Nor Israel's thousands, wore alone
That holy signet now.
Tho' born divided far, by flood,
(In differing climes) of kindred blood,
One name th' unnumbered nations stood
Transported to avow.

But see !—what spotless robes are those
That wrap a countless throng,
Whose looks bespeak a calm repose,
Whose lips, a joyous song.
The victor's palm, their hands enfold,
Nor is it on their harps of gold,
But with loud voices strong and bold,
Thanksgivings sound along ?

With raptured eye th' Apostle saw
The beaming troops advance,
Unravelling not, in troubled awe,
The wonders of that glance.
When lo ! a sage with silvery hair,
Decked by a crown he seemed to wear
But for *His* sake, who placed it there,
Explained the glorious trance.

“ Calm, tho' thou seest, divine and bright,
This multitude appears,
Those eyes which now look life and light,
Were once all dewed with tears.
In tribulation's furnace, they
Have trod with pain their patient way,
Thro' sorrow's long and dreary day,
And mortals' fleshly fears.

“ Content to suffer loss and shame,
To labor for His sake,
They conquered thro’ the Lamb’s loved name,
Tho’ nature faint and weak.
Their spots are wash’d, their robes made clean,
In His own blood, from every stain.
Among them now, He joys to reign
And they, to hear Him speak.

“ No sin assaults their hallow’d breast,
Temptations now are o’er,
They dread, in this eternal rest,
Vain anxious thoughts no more.
No anguish now—no tearful eye,
Head bent with grief—heartbreaking sigh,
No hunger, thirst, or parching sky,
In this unchanging shore.

“ And Unbelief, which dares intrude
Ev’n on the holiest hour,
Unwelcome to the soul renew’d,
Tho’ shrinking in its power,
Exists no more—by light enwreath’d,
Each soul from every harm is sheath’d,
And Faith in living fountains bath’d,
There blooms a fadeless flow’r.”

Didst thou not recognise, blest Seer,
In that bright band enroll’d,
The saints and prophets martyr’d here,
As scripture lines unfold?
Or couldst thou in each seraph face,
One pang of mortal anguish trace?
No—tho’ they sprung of mourning race,
The tale is there untold.

No stain is on thy brow of snow,
First of the martyr'd line,*
Emblem of blood, whose precious flow
Spake better things than thine.
On toil-worn Jacob, see ! no care—
His sorrows o'er, how calm his air !
Like the smooth wave when angels fair
Breathe on the foaming brine.

In patient Abra'am's beaming eye,
Fixed once in faith and fear,
No more his Isaac seems to lie
Stretched for the burning bier.
Faith lost in sight, and all things done,
He needs no type, for he hath won,
To see THE CHRIST, his promised SON,
Rule the celestial sphere.

Thine ears, meek Moses, in that crowd,
No thankless murmurs meet,
Where He thou saw'st in fiery cloud,
Now holds love's mercy seat.
Psalmist of Israel ! thy sweet strings
No more one note of sadness brings,
Thou art not seen with drooping wings,
While harping at his feet.

'Twas Jesse's son whose plaintive lyre
So sweet, so sadly strung,
Now rose in all the warmth of fire,
And now neglected hung.
Soft were his strains, and some 'tis true
Of joy that fled like summer's dew,
But sorrow's furnace oft'ner drew
The anguish'd notes he sung.

* Heb. xii. 24.

That harp is silent, but how sweet
The breath it left behind,
Like perfume burn'd 'tis exquisite,
And scents the viewless wind.
The written record seems to share
The Spirit which once inscribed it there,
We chant his hymn, we breathe his prayer,
And thus partake his mind.

Oh while the eye of faith can see
So bright a scene as this,
It lingers in such company
A golden hour of bliss.
But time would fail in blest amount,
The thousand thousands could I count,
Enlarged each moment from that fount
Where Christ makes creatures *His*.

Since John (belov'd of Jesus) view'd
That glorious sight on high,
Oh what a countless multitude
Of *His*, has gemmed the sky.
Martyrs and saints, who, in *His* cause,
Have scorn'd the world, and world's applause,
Wept for *His* sake, *His* broken laws,
Nor feared for Him to die.

And were we now allowed to see
A sight like this revealed,
Some faces there we know, would be
As saints of God unveiled.
Some who, of late, have passed away,
Like meteors in a clouded day,
A blaze shed forth, too bright to stay,
And now in death concealed.

Say whose the form so brilliant wreathed,
Stars round his shining head,
Earth's atmosphere could he have breathed,
Whose looks such lustre shed ?
Brainerd 'tis thou ! whose patient toil
Labour'd thro' faith in Indian soil,
And thou hast won the serpent's spoil,
And grief and pain are fled.

And by thy side, united clings,
A form like love benign,
Together strike his harp's sweet strings
With every note of thine.
'Tis Martyn ! he whose anxious breast,
Feverish and throbbing found no rest.
He, who the " Land of Roses," blest
With Jesus' light divine.

Oh see their wings, their robes how fair,
Hear each melodious voice !
Thou, oh my soul, wouldst fain be there,
But be not *Ease* thy choice.
If to that bliss thou would'st aspire,
Thou must possess a burnish'd lyre,
Tried, proved like theirs, in sevenfold fire,
Would'st thou with them rejoice.

Evening being far advanced when this poem was finished, the parties separated, and young Villeroi returned home a little more enlightened in his views, but cooled in his enthusiasm. In fact, he was in that state of mind which we may call the religion of imagination ; his affections were heated with cer-

glowing sentiments on subjects which his understanding pronounced good, and these two united, produced impressions on his character, which, in his own opinion and that of others, were the offspring of genuine and spiritual Christianity. But, alas, they were as fair blossoms grafted on a sapless stem; his heart was yet unregenerate, unacquainted with its own state, though well aware of the general state of mankind; and destitute of life-giving faith, though from religious education and habitual association with persons who were, for the most part, sincere and devout Christians, he was well informed that faith is the very principle of spiritual vitality. But, it may be asked, What new anomaly is this? A youth full of missionary zeal, and devoted to religious employments without the possession of religion himself? Can such a character exist in reality? and if so, where are we to look for the proofs of our Lord's unerring test—"By their fruits ye shall know them?"

Alas, it is too true! talents, and zeal, and energy may all be found without the fruits of the Spirit. It is the *graces* of Christianity, not the *gifts* which mark the character of the true believer. It is his *love*, and *joy*, and *peace*, his *long suffering*, *meekness*, *gentleness*, *faith*. These denote the indwelling of Christ in the heart, and cannot exist separately from Him. They spring from the root itself, and though not always in a flourishing state, yet must be found in some degree wherever there is genuine faith.

But activity, and invention, and animation, and

eloquence, and generosity, and many other brilliant qualities may be the mere offspring of Nature, and belong to an individual who never truly took upon him the yoke, or knew what it was to have the mind that was in Christ. Accidental circumstances may concur to bring these into the service of the Gospel, but perhaps under another influence they would have been equally available for the service of the world.

CHAPTER II.

“ Take up thy cross and run. If *love* be there
 Strong will thy courage be, the cross to bear.
 If fancy only prompts thy flight, oh stay,
 Her foot will tire e'er thou art half the way,
 But let thy heart in Christ its portion find,
 It ne'er will turn aside, or look behind.”

ANON.

SOME time after the events, related in the preceding chapter, had taken place, a conversation occurred in Mr. Villeroi's family, respecting the future settlement and destination of his son Henry. Mr. Villeroi, being a benevolent parent, as well as an experienced Christian, used to converse openly with his wife and children, about their domestic circumstances, and never took any important step, even for their interest, without consulting their inclinations; his intentions and measures were generally so reasonable, and so kind, that he had little difficulty in leading his children into his own will, even when he appeared to be complying with theirs. And his wife, the dear and judicious partner of his counsels, by her well-timed tenderness, and maternal persua-

sion, helped him to guide the movements of the domestic circle with equal gentleness and skill.

Assembled round the breakfast table one morning, Mr. Villeroi began the conversation by addressing Henry in his usual affectionate tone and manner.

"Well, my son, your birth day will occur in a few days; you will then be sixteen, a serious age, and time to look about you, and think of fulfilling some of the purposes of life. Your elementary education is sufficiently advanced to prepare you for the study of any profession you may select, and if you have thought about it, Henry, I should like to know in what direction your inclinations lean, as in some cases there may be preparatory steps to take, concerning which my daily intercourse with society, may afford me advantageous opportunities, when I know exactly what is to be desired."

Henry looked down for a moment, and played with his teacup and spoon. There was a pause.

"Well, Henry love," asked his mother, "have we taken you by surprise? Perhaps you have never thought much on the subject, or are not yet determined; but you know we need not decide directly, suppose we now talk about it among ourselves. I know you are not fond of business, so I am sure your father will not propose any plan in the mercantile way to you but what do you think of the learned professions: Law?" "Oh no, mamma," cried Henry. "Physic?" "Worse and worse." "Divinity? which goes last, according to the order of precedence established in all public processions, coronations, installatio

&c. &c.," said his mother playfully. Henry hesitated. "Why, mamma, in some sense, I have thought of the church." "In what sense, my love?" Henry coloured deeply and paused again. A remembrance of Leighton's words, and a half-conscious idea of his unworthiness for the office, pressed upon his mind, and he was unwilling to give his wishes utterance; his embarrassment was not unnoticed by his sister Louisa, the dear and intimate companion of most of his thoughts and feelings, and as she guessed the subject on which he was thinking, she relieved him by breaking open his way. "I think, Henry," said she, that I have sometimes heard you speak of your wish to become a missionary." His mother's eyes glistened as this hint was uttered. "Yes, my son," said she, "if you proved worthy of so high an office, gladly would I resign you, to spend your life, and even risk health and safety, by devoting yourself to the rescue of the perishing heathens from their idols and false religion. But you know it is not to be undertaken like any other profession, merely with a little preparatory study, or some legal forms; there must be a preparation of the heart; a fitness which cannot be obtained by the use of mere human instrumentality. Have you thought of this, Henry?"

"I have," he replied, "and I feel such a peculiar interest in this subject, and think I could be so useful, that I have resolved, if you and my father will consent, to go abroad, as soon as I am old enough, and plant the standard of the Cross on every pagan shore."

"Well, Henry," said his father, "if this idea of yours is really the result of a deliberate choice, and not the mere evanescent decision of a heated fancy, I have no wish to oppose it. God forbid I should hinder you, my child, from following the dictates of conscience, or it may be, the call of a Divine influence, to give yourself to a high and holy work. But, to follow up your mother's observation, I must add, that besides giving yourself with very peculiar and devoted attention to the advancement of your own spiritual concerns, by constant and fervent prayer, there is a course of preparatory study to be entered upon, which will greatly facilitate your missionary labours in whatever countries your lot may be cast, and which your extreme youth will allow you to prosecute with advantage, as you have much time to spare, before you could possibly offer yourself to any of the societies for promoting missionary exertions."

"Well, papa," said Henry, "I have been considering all this for a long time, and with your advice and instructions I should like to commence immediately whatever course of study you would most recommend."

Mr. Villeroi paused, and then replied, that it would be necessary to consult some wise and experienced friends, as to the choice of his destination; and then, as to the best means of acquiring that peculiar information which would be most useful. But that, in the mean time, he thought that Henry could not employ his time better, than in trying to master the original languages in which the Holy *Scriptures* were written.

Henry fully agreed with his father's suggestions, and, delighted to have his plan realized, at least so far as the commencement, he began from this time, to prosecute with ardor, the course of study recommended. It was arranged that his education should be completed under the superintendence of the Church Missionary Society, in whose service he was to act, though without any expense to their funds: for his father generously resolved, not only to consent to the self-dedication of his son, to the work, but to provide for him entirely independent of public contributions for this purpose. The East Indies was selected for his destination, and he commenced his study of the Sanscrit, which, as the learned language of the Hindoo provinces, was necessary to be understood previously to acquiring the vernacular dialects. The translation of the Serampore missionaries, as accredited by the chief Pundits of the college of Fort William, *Ramjuy Turkalunkar*, and *Ramnath Vachasputee*, was put into his hands, and a young man, himself destined for the same sacred duty, who had already made considerable progress in the language, was appointed to give him any assistance which he might require. This assistant proved to be no other than Theophilus Leighton, the very individual with whom Villeroi had been thrown in contact some time before, at the evening party, and whose decisive language, on that occasion, had been the means of arousing his mind to more serious self-examination than it was accustomed to, though it had not caused him to

alter his purpose. It was, however, with no small surprise and pleasure, that Henry received him now as his companion and instructor, and Leighton, who soon recognised him also, was equally pleased at their meeting under these new circumstances. Henry immediately began his course of reading with the ardor which was natural to his character in every new pursuit. He rose very early every morning, seated himself at his desk with his grammars, lexicons, and Greek and Hebrew Scriptures: these he laboured hard to master by himself. When Leighton joined him after breakfast, they studied the Sanscrit together, with such helps as they could procure from the observations made upon the language by the learned missionaries who had waded through these difficulties before them; and after a certain time had been spent in this employment, they generally went out together to refresh themselves in the open air, and enjoy the sweet sea breezes curling the waves upon the sandy shore, that lies just beneath the high and frowning cliffs of the town, where they resided. Continued and intimate intercourse of this kind, gave them a considerable interest in one another; though the superiority of Leighton's attainments gave him an affectionate influence over Henry, which he rather *felt* than *acknowledged*. Leighton's character, under the modification of divine grace, was one peculiarly calculated to attract a young and ardent mind. With a deep sense of the moral requirements of the law of God, and an humble view of his own deficiencies, he was yet overflowing with

the charity of the gospel, and ever ready to believe and hope all things that were favourable to others. As the sun exhales vapor from the ocean, to return it in refreshing showers, so his affections seemed exalted to heaven, in order to shed a more benign influence over the social intercourse of life, with his fellow-creatures. Yet, with all this, his religion was not dependent on the impulses of present feeling, or occasional excitement; it was the result of principles implanted in his heart, and which had taken root, and were, therefore, become the constitutional habit of his mind. His religion was less the offspring of his feelings, than his feelings the glowing expression of his deep and heart-embraced religion; he was, therefore, less disturbed than young believers usually are, by the accidental changes of society, into which circumstances might carry him. In the World he was not at home; he had few enjoyments in common with it, and of those few he partook in moderation, and in a different spirit. With its revelries and vanities he avoided mixing; and when accident brought him in contact with the world's votaries, they seldom attempted to meddle with him or his opinions; so little hope had they of drawing him over to *their* party, and so much fear, lest the weight and influence of his words should persuade any of them to join *his*. Not that he was always admonishing others, nor looking gloomily at them, nor drawing contrasts between their ways and his own; but he was CONSISTENT and uniform in adherence to his principles, a character which, in a

Christian, the world can neither tolerate nor abuse, and, therefore, which it hates and would avoid. Oh! happy believer, if you are one whom the world dislikes and shuns; if you are not on friendly terms with that which hated and persecuted your Lord and Master, who has left these impressive words on record, as a test to all future disciples—*“if ye are of the world, the world will love its own!”*

Leighton had discernment enough to perceive the danger to which the amiable and impressible character of his young associate exposed him; but he also knew that time and circumstances alone could reveal to him clearly, the weaknesses respecting which he should be on his guard. He watched with interest the lively and vigorous effort with which he commenced his studies preparatory to the missionary career—the indefatigable diligence with which he pondered over his self-imposed task, and courageously mastered all the first difficulties presented by the language he was to acquire. After a little time, however, his spirits became less elevated; he complained of weariness and headache; his hours of study were reduced in length, and he hinted that, as he had plenty of time to spare before he could possibly go abroad, there was no use in worrying himself with such continued mental exercise. One day he made this remark to Leighton, after puzzling himself to trace a difficult word to its root, and requested him to come out and walk *then*, though there remained still an hour of their usual time for study, unelapsed. “I am quite willing to go out

with you," said his friend, "for I see you are weary, and you know I advised you, in the commencement of your labors, not to undertake so much till your mind became habituated to application. I think so many hours a day, as you have devoted in this manner, are quite too much at your age, and overcoming both to health and spirits."

"Do you indeed?" replied Henry, delightedly; for he had half expected a reproach for his want of perseverance.

"Yes," answered Leighton, "but I have something more to say about it when we get under the cliffs, and if our favourite walk revives your spirits a little, I will tell you what I think on the subject."

It was about two hours after noon, when Henry and his companion found themselves walking along the sea shore, and enjoying the coolness of a fine spring breeze. The day was remarkably clear and brilliant, the waves, light and sparkling, were covered with little boats, and trading vessels of various sizes, while at some distance beyond the suspension pier, was seen a ship of greater magnitude riding, in all her majesty, at anchor. "How delightfully I feel *now*," said Henry, "I am quite another man since I set out, and am equal to any thing; even Hebrew or Sanscrit, I think."

Leighton smiled.

"Why do you smile?" asked Henry, "don't you think it is quite natural for me to feel more animated and lively under the influence of these

delightful breezes than shut up at home in a library, and at a severe study."

"Indeed I do," answered Leighton, "but, Henry, my dear friend, permit me to say, that I regret to see how much you refer every thing to *feeling*, and how easily your opinion varies according to the last impression you receive. While you are excited and pleased with the view of any subject, you immediately decide that it is the only one worthy of pursuit, and then you lay aside every other with disdain to devote yourself wholly to this."

"And is it not right to be zealously affected in a good thing?"

"Surely; but remember if it is *good* our affection to it must be *unalienable*; if it is evil, we must have nothing to say to it."

"But, Leighton, how shall we know what is good or worthy of pursuit without a trial?"

"My dear Henry, you are supposing your own mind and impressions to be the judge in this case, and that nothing is to be pronounced useful, agreeable, or practicable, till *you have found* it to be so. Now, only look back at your own sensations within this half hour, and you will acknowledge, that what appeared to you dull and difficult, even to disgust at home, wears now quite another aspect."

"Ah, I see you are laughing at me for my weariness over the Sanscrit; but, my wise and devoted Leighton, do you not make some allowance for bodily infirmity, which cannot bear beyond a certain quantity of close and fatiguing application?"

"Indeed I do Henry ; but *you* are making no allowance for it?"

"How do you mean?"

"Why you are trying to persuade yourself, that the impressions made upon this feeble body, which you admit is liable to so many fluctuations, are the real standard of right and wrong, while I would endeavour to be independent of them, and to draw my principles of action from a higher source."

"Ah, I understand you," cried Henry ; "but then it is so very hard to go on with any difficult occupation when one has ceased to be interested about it."

"But why should one cease to be interested about it if it is really good?"

Henry looked embarrassed.

"Because we have commenced without duly examining our motives. If we really seek the glory of God, and enter upon any undertaking, because it is a duty pointed out in scripture, pleasing to Him, useful to others, and a means of cultivating in our own hearts a likeness to His image and character; these motives are like an immoveable basis of rock, which cannot change or be swept away; and therefore, though we may languish under the infirmity of human nature, and struggle through the path of duty with pain and difficulty, yet it can never lose the interest or desirableness which it once possessed. But if we choose a difficult pursuit through whim, or sudden captivation, without counting the cost, we shall see, by and by, it is like building the house on

the sand, which tempests and floods will soon sweep away, and leave not a wreck behind."

"But," said Henry, "it is a very matter-of-fact, *downright* way of doing anything, to begin by calculating on its usefulness and practicability, &c. Now, I think it is much more delightful, and will carry one a great deal farther, to set out with an enthusiastic disregard to consequences, in all the energy of excited feeling."

"Yes, Henry, it will carry you faster and farther for a time, but that which depends on *feeling* for its success, will be given up whenever that feeling subsides; and you and I have lived long enough to know that trifles will often produce this effect. Yes, even such trifles as we would scarcely acknowledge to ourselves, could have such influence.

"The position you are trying to establish, is a favourite one with men of warm imagination, and is often productive of short and brilliant efforts of genius, but never could be the parent of any very useful or ingenious works, such as enlighten mankind, and hand down the fame of an author to succeeding generations—for these require labour and perseverance. The remark holds equally good with respect to every valuable production or attainment. Feeling, or Talent, or Enthusiasm, or whatever it may be designated, can only invent or give the first impulse, but application must pursue, and steadiness bring to perfection."

"Indeed I believe you are not far wrong, Leigh-

ton, for I can look back at a great many occasions in my past life in which I attempted every kind of art that fancy put into my head. My desk is full of unfinished scraps of poetry, each of which I commenced under some particular impulse, such as a walk by moonlight, parting from a friend, &c. &c.; but they never went beyond a dozen lines; as soon as I found the rhymes troublesome, I gave them up. I remember also, after reading some travels in the South Sea islands, immediately setting off to my garden to build an Indian hut, and fashion a miniature canoe; but before they were finished I began reading some work of natural history, which put the hut and canoe out of mind, and I began to collect butterflies and moths to put in a cabinet."

"Yes, you are helping me to prove my point," returned Leighton; "but these are trifling things, and it was of little consequence whether they were ever begun or finished, except so far as they contributed to form the habits of a character. But apply the principle to matters of moment, to the concerns of eternity, and then we shall see how important it is to be steady and decided. Did you ever read the Pilgrim's Progress?"

"Bunyan's? Oh yes, often. It was the favourite storybook of my childhood, and the delightful recreation of my riper years."

"It is a fine illustration of the scripture, '*Know ye not that they which run in a race, run all—but one receiveth the prize.*'* Christian was accompanied

* 1 Cor. ix. 24.

part of the way by many companions, but most of them got tired or frightened and returned back. Now, Christian would have done the same if he had chosen the road, as some of them did, either for its novelty, or amusement, or because they had nothing to do; but he had fixed in his mind one grand principle, which was sufficient to make him go on and struggle through every discouragement, even though he slumbered on the hill of difficulty, and was taken captive by the giant Despair, and was nigh turning aside when he encountered the lions. These things were all too formidable for the others, but to him who had seen the dangers of the city of Destruction, and had resolved to flee from it, and who had counted that the glories of the celestial world were worth seeking for, they were as nothing; he persevered and he obtained the victory."

"But how can we help the change that comes over our views? Suppose Christian had happened some day or other to forget the celestial city, and to think with regret on the pleasure he had once enjoyed in the city of Destruction. Would he be guilty for remembering them if he did not absolutely turn back?"

Leighton sighed deeply. "Ah, my young friend," said he, "a renewed heart cannot look back with *regret* at having left the scenes of worldly indulgence and carnal delight. We do not see any such thoughts attributed to Christian by the pious writer of the allegory; nor do we find it expressed by one disciple of the LORD JESUS, in scripture, except of

Demas, where it is stated in the same passage that it had been the cause of his apostacy. '*Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world.*'* And remember also what our Lord declared of such individuals, that 'no man, having put his hand to the gospel plough, and *looking back*, is fit for the kingdom of God.' †

The quotation of this passage made Henry start, as if he had never heard it before. The truth was, he had heard it indeed with his outward ears, but its force, and self-application, was quite new to him. He felt that he had undertaken to guide the gospel plough, and was unfit for the trust. His friend perceived the blow had reached his heart, and was silent, lest the impression might be weakened by human attempts to make it stronger. But he walked on silently beside him, earnestly beseeching the Lord, the giver of every good and perfect gift, to shine forth with his awakening light on young Henry's understanding, to make him fully sensible of the plague of his fallen nature, and the insufficiency of every step which could be taken, till his soul was new created from above.

* 2 Tim. iv. 10.

† Luke ix. 22.

CHAPTER III.

"We glorify God, both by conforming our conduct to His character and pleasure, and by exhibiting this conformity to the view of our fellow men."—DWIGHT.

It is not an easy thing to know the human heart. Truly it is said to be deceitful above all things, for those who suspect its deceptions least, are most generally under a dangerous influence. Henry Villeroi had learned, from a child, to consider himself a depraved and fallen being, in common with the rest of the human race; yet, strange to say, he made no personal application of this broad principle; he never laid it home to his heart in such a manner as to bring self-conviction with it; and the consequence was, that he *had a name to live*, and even supposed himself to be a living believer, while he was *dead*. It is true he had been so carefully educated as to be preserved, in a great measure, from evil example. He had never been sent to a public school, but had been instructed at home, under the eye of his father,

by a careful and discreet tutor ; his associates had also been selected with great care, and the habits of his father's family were such, as to expose him very little to the contagion of either wickedness or frivolity. Nevertheless, all these circumstances had only affected the outward man, and given him a certain favorable bias towards serious subjects, but they had not extinguished the propensities of an evil nature, nor implanted a heavenly mind. Henry did not sigh for the theatre or the ball-room, because he knew not any one who frequented them ; nor did he regret the want of an enjoyment, which his ignorance prevented him from estimating. He knew nothing of field sports, or games of hazard, and, therefore, no one ever saw him interested in either ; but those who supposed he refrained from principle, were under a mistake. He had been used to pleasures of a more innocent and simple kind ; his excursions had been always taken in company with his own family. He and his sisters possessed beautiful little ponies, on which they were accustomed to ride ; his father had a small pleasure-boat, in which the family used to enjoy the sea in fine weather, and sometimes make little trips to Blackgang Chine, or Brading, in the Isle of Wight ; and when the weather was less favorable, or the family more gravely disposed, they used to enjoy themselves in their own delightful home, with books, drawings, conversation, or music, as the case might be. Henry, therefore, had never felt the want of excitements, and these being of a harmless nature, the

deep pool of sin lay undisturbed at the bottom of his soul, its upper surface being smooth and glassy, scarcely ruffled by a single breeze. But the time was now arrived in which this deadly stillness was to be disturbed, and Henry was to find out the sad truth, that the work of the new birth was yet to be performed within him. The conversation related in the last chapter was the means of making a considerable impression; the more he inquired into the state of his motives and feelings, the less calculated he felt himself to be, for the momentous duty he had so thoughtlessly undertaken; and he now proposed throwing up the plan altogether, as a person unfit and unworthy of such an office. Leighton perceiving that this not unusual effect in youth, of flying to an opposite extreme, when disappointed in some scheme of imagination, would be very injurious to Henry, attempted to reason mildly with him, and to urge the better plan, of not relinquishing his first object, but of endeavouring to make himself more fit for its responsibilities; he pressed upon his attention the high and blessed opportunities he now enjoyed, of devoting himself, body and soul to the Lord; he reminded him of the promises made to those who had no strength, and his duty, in seeking the Divine influence, upon his heart, to renew within him those powers, which would enable him to glorify the Lord Jesus, and be his faithful disciple. "Turn not away, dear Henry," said his friend, "for the Lord may have called you to be a teacher of his gospel, as assuredly he *has*

called you to give him your whole heart. Decide not, therefore, as to *whither* you will direct your future steps, till you have put yourself completely under his divine guidance, and then you will find your path made clear, and your doubts and difficulties all removed."

A short time after this conversation, Leighton invited his young friend to accompany him on a visit to his father, who was the rector of a small parish in the northern part of Hampshire. He had farther objects in view than the mere present gratification, or entertainment of his friend, as will appear when we are introduced to the family circle at Lilybrook rectory. Henry accepted the invitation with pleasure, as he was attached to Leighton, and anticipated, with harmless animation, much delight in joining the social circle, in which he expected to find every member as truly amiable and pleasing as Theophilus. Mr. and Mrs. Villeroi were also pleased to see the intimacy deepening between their son and his friend, as they were sensible of the steady, enlightened, and devoted character of the latter, and hoped that his superior principles and conduct would help to confirm in wisdom's ways, the light step of their interesting but versatile boy.

Summer was advanced to its prime when Henry and Leighton set off on their visit to the rectory. A few hours' drive brought them to the entrance of the village, which was situated in a pretty, retired part of the country, shrouded with large trees, and chiefly inhabited by peasantry; the entrance to the

village was over a rude stone bridge, covering a stream of pure and limpid water, that took its rise from a spring in the upper part of Mr. Leighton's meadows, and after wandering along through the garden in a circuitous course, bathing, as it went, some beautiful water-lilies, planted there by the hand of taste, it gurgled through some rough stones beneath a rustic bridge, and then spread out in a broad but shallow stream through the lower division of the village. The original name of the place, or parish, I do not know; but the Rectory having obtained the name of Lily-brook, from the fair stream that sparkled through it, and the white flowers on its bosom, the peasantry had appropriated this designation to their own little rows of cottages adjoining; thus identifying in one name, as well as one interest, the Rectory and its neighbourhood.

Henry was charmed with the old-fashioned house as he approached, its long windows and antiquated gables peeping between the high trees which stood near. "Well, Leighton," said he, rubbing his hands, "this is really a very romantic, sweet place. I am determined to like every body and every thing, and I am sure I shall be very happy here." Leighton smiled. "Dear Henry," said he, "I don't wish to check your pleasurable emotions, nor the amiable disposition you shew to please and be pleased; but I wish your happiness depended less upon momentary excitement." Just at this juncture, the gig in which they were travelling was about to enter the stream. Leighton preferred bringing his horse over it in this way

for the sake of giving him water, instead of crossing the bridge. Two little children were sporting on the margin, one of whom had pulled off its shoes and stockings with the intent of walking through, while the other, less wise, but probably of more vivacity, had plunged in, and was wading up to the knees in its clothes, laughing and enjoying itself with the highest glee. "Now, Henry," continued Leighton, "you are sometimes just like that little child: you rush into whatever circumstances happen to take your fancy, and enjoy them for a while, never thinking of consequences; but as that poor child will find itself, by and by, chilly and cold, perhaps much injured by the experiment, while the other more considerate one will escape; so, dear Henry, with you——"

"Stop, stop," cried Henry, laughing: "no more of your moralizing, I pray. I am not in a grave enough humour; besides, though slow in calculating *consequences*, you know I am not in drawing conclusions. So, dear friend, I make the self-application, and now no more lecturing for the present. I am all impatience to be introduced to my good mother, Mrs. Leighton, and my excellent aunt Harriet, and all my friends, young and old, at Lilybrook." "Ah, I see some of them already," cried Leighton, throwing the reins into Henry's hands, and jumping quickly out of the gig: "there is my dear, *dear* mother, and my brother Philip, and my little sisters, walking down the avenue. I know they are expecting us, for I wrote word that we would be here about this hour." He did not stay to relate any more, but

running forward with all the animation which Henry could have showed or felt on such an occasion, he rushed into his mother's arms, and gave her a tender, filial embrace; his brother and little sisters came in likewise for a share in his caresses, (many months having elapsed since they had last parted); but before he would answer any of their numerous inquiries, he led them forward to receive his friend, who, now dismounting, was introduced to the happy group. The impression made by their appearance, did not entirely destroy the bright anticipations of Henry, though he thought the faces of the two sisters too round and ruddy to be very interesting, and more expressive of good nature and good humour, than of refinement or sensibility. Philip resembled his brother in exterior form; he had the same expanded brow, and deep, thoughtful countenance; but his manner was less meek, less subdued. His manly, courageous bearing had a certain tincture of pride and self-esteem, which, in the eye of inexperience, might pass for proper dignity of spirit, but over which the Christian moralist would lament, as symptomatic of an unsubdued mind.

Philip had, indeed, much to contend with in his own heart; for the strongest tendencies of his natural character were to the indulgence of those dispositions which the world applauds, but Christianity condemns. His vices would have been heathen virtues; yea, more, even in this enlightened country are some to be found who would have thought better of him for their indulgence. For instance, nature

prompted him to seek distinction in life ; ambition was one of his prominent characteristics ; the world was ready to tell him, in unison with the throbbings of his own heart, how well qualified he was to shine in society, to become eminent in a profession ; but grace was struggling in his soul with her still small voice, pleading the safety and the surety of those, who seek not their portion with the men of this life, whose aim is to honor the Lord Jesus, and who forget their own interests and self-appropriating love, in their identity with Him. He had gone through college with credit, and had been on the point of obtaining a situation of considerable advantage immediately on receiving his degree, when the treacherous conduct of a friend, who knew the circumstances, deprived him of his expectations, and he saw another substituted in his place. Wounded pride and proper spirit, as the world calls it, prompted him to a feeling of hatred towards the individual who had betrayed and supplanted him ; but divine grace had a strong influence over his heart, and prevented the feeling from breaking into action, though its struggles for liberty gave him constant uneasiness, and planted a contracting wrinkle upon his otherwise smooth and fair countenance. Leighton knew his brother's struggles, and sympathized with and prayed for him. When together, they were always in the habit of communicating their thoughts with the most perfect freedom, and when absent they maintained an affectionate and intimate correspondence. To the advice and firm principles of Theophilus, Philip owed much : he had

been strengthened and upheld when just ready to give up the conflict, and had been led back by his brother to the fold of the good Shepherd many times, after straying among the briars of the wilderness.

Mrs. Leighton was a very pleasing looking woman, of a matronly appearance, and plainly dressed: she received Henry with great cordiality, and welcomed him to the country. Leighton inquired for his father, his aunt Harriet, and cousin Elizabeth, and was told they were all engaged for the present in duties that were indispensable, but that he might expect to meet them at dinner time. They now returned up the avenue to the house, the little girls, who were about ten and twelve years of age, running on before, to announce the arrival, while the happy mother leaned affectionately on the arm of her justly-beloved Theophilus. "And what is my dear aunt about today," he inquired, "that she is not in the way to welcome us?" She is gone to the end of the Long Wood, with Elizabeth, to see some old cottagers, who are too infirm and live too far from the church to attend regularly: she has set apart two days in the week for visiting them at a certain hour, in which she reads and converses with them upon the concerns of eternity. You know, Theophilus, that your father has long called Harriet his curate: she acts entirely by his advice, and under his directions, and has obtained so much influence over the female parishioners, and, through them, over some of the men also, that he says he would not give up her services for any consideration."

"And does she do any thing beside read and talk to them?"

Oh yes: she encourages the women to be industrious; she is always inventing little plans to make out something for the old and infirm to do; and in this department Elizabeth gives her great help. The produce is inconsiderable; for our village is so small, that the repository we have established gets very little sale: trifling as it is, however, we all try to encourage it; and when the poor people are very old and helpless, we buy up ourselves whatever they are able to manufacture, and take our chance of disposing of it afterwards. It is true, this plan is expensive, but we find it one of the best modes of giving relief."

"But is there not a parish work-house?" asked Henry.

"There is; but we wish, if possible, to keep this resource for the very last. Experience shows, that it has an injurious effect upon the people: those who are admitted lose the honest and proper wish of not being burdensome to any one; and their friends the opportunity of fulfilling a natural duty. The mutual relationships and duties of society are calculated to produce a beautiful moral effect, if not interrupted. We therefore recommend, as much as possible, that parents should remain with their children, and infirm relations with those who are nearest akin, unless in cases where there is absolutely no means of sufficient support, and, even then, we often prefer making an allowance to help a family, rather than take a member

of it away, to break and disturb a providential connection."

"Do the poor murmur or object to your plans? I should be a little afraid of their using the old people ill, if they were thus obliged to maintain them."

"We do not *oblige* them to any thing," said Mrs. Leighton; "but we live so much among them ourselves, devote so much time to their interests, and, in fact, love them all so well, that we have obtained considerable influence among them. We know the name, the state, and circumstances of every family in the parish, visit them all occasionally, and meet with many of them very often in the opportunities which daily occur in our routine of intercourse, for instruction and otherwise. I think, indeed I *am sure*, they all regard my husband as their father, as their best earthly friend, one who watches over their welfare as he does over that of his own children; and this impression produces an important train of results. They place implicit confidence in his opinion, because they know he is not only kind, but wise; and every plan that he recommends is adopted, and every person whom he engages to assist in his labours among them, is received with the regard they would pay to himself."

The party had now arrived at the house, the entrance to which was a wide rustic porch, beautifully intertwined with climbing shrubs: on one side lay the drawing-room, and on the other the parlour, both good-sized rooms, and neatly, but plainly, furnished. There were no expensive looking-glasses, no loungers, no indulging chairs, nor any of the modern

inventions of luxury. Henry had been used to mix with a very wealthy class of society, and though he knew that Mr. Leighton was not rich, yet he expected, from his rank and connections, which were highly respectable, to see some greater appearance of decoration than the Rectory afforded. He had been accustomed to think pier-glasses or mirrors indispensable ornaments, and to see various little expensive toys, French clocks, and specimens of china ranged over the marble—to see rich window curtains, hanging in graceful festoons, drooping under the weight of pendant tassels and trimmings—Brussels carpets, thick and soft, muffling every tread—ornamental tables, inlaid with brass, and covered with elegant trifles, for show, not use: these and sundry other circumstances were common to the houses and apartments of most of his friends, but here he was surprised by the quiet simplicity of every arrangement. The principal ornament of the drawing-room was a portrait of the great and good archbishop who bore the family name, and to whom they claimed a distant relationship by collateral descent; vases of fresh flowers breathed their odours on the mantel-piece, immediately beneath the picture; the windows were shaded with neat muslin curtains, and the floor covered with a plain carpet. Besides chairs and mahogany tables, the room contained a large old-fashioned sofa, kept for the accommodation of any of the family who might be unwell, or fatigued with laborious duty, otherwise it was seldom used; and at the further end of the room, extending nearly its whole breadth, were

a set of neat shelves, with sliding glass-doors, supplied with the best works, ancient and modern, for family reading. Two or three books lay on the table amidst some articles of female industry, intimating that they were at the time in use; one was the *Life of Henry Martyn*, which had been then but lately published; the others were *Foster's Essays*, *Newton's Cardiphonia*, *Wilberforce's Practical View of Christianity*, and a volume of *Mrs. Sherwood's Stories*. There were also several little books, evidently belonging to young children, as they did not seem so carefully or so neatly kept as the others. Henry was taking a general view of these things, and making his own reflections, while Leighton was speaking a few words in private to his mother. Meantime, Jessy and Jane, his two younger sisters, whom we mentioned before, and who had disappeared on entering the house, now returned with a servant, bringing in refreshments, while they themselves led forward, three lively smiling little ones, between the ages of five and nine, to greet their beloved brother; they sprang into his arms, while he kissed and embraced them with great tenderness: the eldest of them, a sweet little girl, came forward also to Henry, and gave her hand to him with confiding simplicity, but the two younger held back and would not speak, although he tried to encourage them. He opened one of the little books which lay on the table; it was full of coloured prints. "Pretty pictures," said Henry, holding the book extended to little Edward, the youngest child—"who painted these for you?" "Aunt Harriet," said the child. "And

who reads the pretty stories to you?" "Aunt Harriet," was the reply. "And can you say the little hymn that is in it?" "I can say it to aunt Harriet." Mrs. Leighton smiled. "My children are so much attached to my sister," said she, "that everything they say, or do, or enjoy, is linked with the association of her presence or her name. I hope, my dear young friend, that you too will like her when you get acquainted; for there are few to whom she is introduced who are not sensible of pleasure and benefit from her conversation. You will excuse me, Mr. Villeroi," she continued, brushing away a tear of tender affection which started to her eye, "but the society of my dear sister is a treasure which I wish every one to value even as I do."

A spring of lively joy in the children, and a general rush to the porch, here caused Mrs. Leighton to pause, while Theophilus and his friend went to the window to look out. They perceived immediately the exciting cause, for aunt Harriet herself was coming up the avenue, accompanied by her niece Elizabeth. She was a small, delicate-made woman, apparently a year or two younger than her sister, of a pale complexion, but a highly animated and intellectual expression: her face flushed high with pleasure at the announcement evidently made by the children, and she quickened her steps to meet her nephew, who now came forward on her approach. The meeting was more than *affectionate*; it was full of LOVE; pure, Christian, heavenly union of mind. Henry was introduced also, and greeted with a simple and

benign cordiality, which went to his very heart. Elizabeth was a pleasing looking young woman, apparently about twenty-five years of age; her manner was simple and unaffected; and she seemed heartily rejoiced to see her cousin. The whole party returned to the house together; but general conversation was not attempted; for the little people were so animated and full of spirits, and the elder ones so much excited with pleasure at the return of their beloved Theophilus, that their intercourse for the present was little more than direct question and reply.

At dinner, the master of the family made his appearance, a noble-looking man, rather past the prime of life, yet by no means in its decline. His head would have been an interesting subject for a phrenologist—exhibiting in its nearly bald and shining circumference, some of those combinations and developments which are supposed to belong to the first order of human characters. His tall and spare figure gave no idea of the “portly priest,” but corresponded well with the subdued and gentle expression of his countenance, which combined firmness and dignity with humility and love. It was most interesting to see the intercourse of this father and son—the mutual respect and tenderness of each for the other; yet the distance and duties of their respective relationship never forgotten. Indeed the whole family group made a moral picture of harmony and love, not, I trust, very unusual in the circles of those who are under the influence of Christian principle; but, at the same time, not so common as we might expect from the very

General diffusion of evangelical profession. Every member seemed here to hold his or her proper place in society. Mr. Leighton took the lead as lawful and acknowledged superior, and his authority and influence were decisive; yet so gently did he hold the rein, and so well trained were the inferior members of the domestic constitution, that it was never felt as a restraint or curb, but merely as a guiding power. He constantly appealed to Mrs. Leighton for her opinion, showing the confidence he felt in her sound judgment and finely disciplined mind; while her replies were always made, on such appeals, with the readiness and fluency natural to the feminine character, yet with the soft and modest tone, which marked her deference and submission to him who had been providentially appointed her head and ruler.

In her sister Miss Percy's manner, there was a subdued vivacity, which gave great variety to the social circle. She put one in mind of a gazelle, or mountain antelope, that had been tamed, and placed in circumstances foreign to its nature; hence she frequently broke in upon conversation with the most lively and imaginative flow of ideas, throwing light on every thought she touched, and then would seem to recollect herself, when she had proceeded rapidly for some time, draw in her figure, calm her countenance, and lower her voice. But every one loved to hear aunt Harriet speak, and she was never interrupted till she interrupted herself, as if she thought she occupied too much time and engrossed

too much attention. Philip delighted in throwing out some bright and lively idea which he knew would attract the peculiarity of his aunt's mind, excelling in a faculty called by phrenologists *ideality*; and often did she detect his manœuvres, and playfully rebuke him for exposing her weak side. Elizabeth was more a recipient than a contributor in domestic conversation; and where there are several persons who talk well, a person who can listen well, perhaps fills an important station. She was a prudent, quiet, unaffected girl; never wearied of doing kindnesses, full of mercy and good fruits; she possessed no brilliant talents, but many useful ones, and was quite content to take the place in society for which Providence had fitted her, without aiming at any thing beyond her abilities. She was to Mrs. Leighton the left hand, as Miss Percy was the right. Harriet planned, invented, took the lead, both in the education of the children and the good works promoted in the parish; and Elizabeth took the labour and detail as her portion of occupation. Harriet taught her little nieces and nephews how to fill up the time; she put them upon useful plans for their own improvement; she directed the use of the pencil, the pen, the scissors, and the needle. She could draw a sketch in a moment, if they wanted a drawing to copy. She could select an extract, cut out an article without a pattern, or sew with a needle too large or too small, if circumstances required, which sometimes was the case, when happening to need such an implement on extra visits among the poor. But Elizabeth was a

person of no genius, and never could find an expedient for unusual occasions, unless under the direction of a superior mind ; she never could produce materials from her own head for any occasion whatever ; her drawings were mere copies ; her use of the scissors always dependent upon directions and patterns, though she might have used and seen the article to be made scores of times ; and she was generally awkward and unhandy at her sewing, if she had not her own needlebook, workbox, and cotton-balls, immediately at hand. Nevertheless, Elizabeth was exceedingly valuable in her way ; and, as she always followed in the train of aunt Harriet, her deficiencies were seldom betrayed, while her excellencies were quite apparent. She was loved by the elder branches of the family for her usefulness, and by the younger ones for her sweet temper and kindness of heart.

On the night of his arrival, Henry Villeroi was conducted to the same apartment occupied by his friend, in which a second bed had been put up for him to sleep, as the Rectory did not permit sufficient room for separate accommodations. This circumstance, however, was not unpleasant either to Henry or Theophilus, as their affectionate intimacy led them to desire as much of each other's society as possible. As soon as they had retired, Henry commenced, in his characteristic strain of ardent admiration of all he had witnessed : " What delightful people all your family are, my dear Leighton ! You never told me half enough about them. Your father and mother are so kind and so wise ! Your aunt Harriet quite

fascinating; I never met so pleasing a woman, and then so good and so clever. And cousin Elizabeth, how amiable she seems! And your dear little sisters and brothers.—Philip, too, what an interesting manner he has!”

As usual, when Theophilus perceived Henry under the influence of some new excitement, he smiled and sighed.

“Now, what is that sigh for, Theophilus?”

“Henry, my friend, you have only been here *one evening*—why judge so rapidly, and colour every character so highly?”

“Surely, Leighton, you do not mean to contradict the opinion I have expressed?”

“By no means; but I do not think you have had sufficient grounds for forming your opinion; and what I dread, dearest Henry, is this, that if you permit your mind to come to such hasty conclusions in every case, you will often be bitterly disappointed, and sometimes fearfully misled. But mark how I distinguish: as long as you are in the society of faithful friends, who will always accompany you and guard your path, you are in no danger; but, walking through this vale of tears, we must sometimes tread *alone*, and being sojourners in a world of wickedness, we will occasionally find our dwelling-places amongst the habitations of those who love not the Lord; we must, therefore, train our minds to a suspension of opinion, till we find we have sure grounds for its adoption. The experienced traveller over the glaciers always carries a long pole, to search the firmness of *his footing* before he proceeds.”

"But I need not use my pole now, Leighton."

"No, except for the sake of discipline. It will be troublesome to assume it when you are in dangerous circumstances, if you do not accustom yourself to it now."

"However, the traveller, you know, Leighton, (to refer to your own illustration,) only uses it on glaciers."

"And is the Christian traveller not *always* on glaciers? Whether he goes to the right or left, is there any place in this wicked, sinful world where his footsteps may not slide? Oh, yes, my friend, even HERE, where you think yourself so safe, there may be slippery places!—HERE, where you imagine your path is fenced in, there may be dangerous precipices. There is no spot of ground left, since man forfeited paradise, on which we may say, "*Here I am secure, and no evil shall befall me.*"

"You are rather melancholy, my dear Leighton. What are we to do, then?"

"We must fix ourselves upon the Great Rock, Henry! We must cease from man, and place our whole dependence and security in Him who entered into our nature, that he might sympathize with our infirmities, and present himself to our souls as an object of our comprehension and our love: while He possesses the full capacity of GOD to satisfy, to heal, and to restore the lost race to its happiness in His own bosom.—We *love* THAT which we *understand*, and with which we *sympathize*. That is the reason why friendship and affection have so many

charms—why we seek and enjoy the society of the amiable, the intellectual, and the affectionate.—In this lovely character the Lord Jesus presents himself to us to obtain full possession of our hearts: and if we give an undue portion of this regard to the creature, or if we place our happiness, in the first instance, *in the creature*, we are *robbing Him*, and *injuring ourselves*."

Henry seemed thoughtful for a few minutes.

"I see the force of your observations, Leighton, but tell me (for I want to find an excuse for myself) is it not very *natural* to love that which is lovely, and to be charmed with excellence wherever it is to be found?"

"Surely, Henry; but beware of every impulse that is merely *natural*—remember our nature is a frail and *fallen* material, and not to be depended on."

"However, Leighton, in *this instance*, it *may* be from *grace*. Dont you think my pleasure in the society of such excellent and religious people as your family, must arise, in part, from a taste for divine things?"

"Ah! dear Henry, examine closely before you suffer a conclusion like this to satisfy your conscience. Far be it from me to say or to *think* that you are without those tender and blessed influences from above, which gives you an interest in the society and conversation of the Lord's people; but recollect how easily our natural sympathies and tastes may mingle with purer motives, and procure for us enjoyments partaking as much of earthly as of hea-

venly origin.—If we would see clearly into the matter, we should (to borrow an illustration from Nebuchadnezzar's dream) separate the iron from the clay, and inquire how far our minds have been recreated in conversation by those sentiments or ideas which have closely connected us with our God, or how far we have been enjoying the mere pleasures of imagination, of taste, of sociability, and of self-estimation, produced by mutual compliment. Dearest friend, when we dissect ourselves in this manner, in order to find how much we have been acting for God, and how much for ourselves, in the (so called) amiable and harmless intercourse of society, what do you think likely to be the result?"

"To be weighed in the balance and found wanting."*

"But, Leighton, you are *too* strict. I cannot exactly enter into your feelings on these subjects. Such close investigations upon all we say and do, makes religion appear a bondage. Yet Paul calls it a glorious liberty."†

A painful shade came over the countenance of Theophilus as his friend uttered those sentiments. He paused a moment, perhaps to lift up his heart, that he might be enabled to give a wise and suitable reply. "The Christian doctrine, dear Henry, involves apparent contrarieties; it is, indeed, a state of servitude, but to the best of masters; one whose yoke is easy, and his burden light. It is a yoke to the *old man*, which must be crucified, and subdued

* Dan. v. 27.

† Rom. viii. 21.

to its restraints ; but it is a state of glorious liberty to the *new man*, which having received the spirit of Christ, delights to do His will. Now, let me read you a page out of an old author, which will explain this matter to you more fully than I can do. Leighton stepped over to a bookcase in the room, filled with ancient looking volumes : he selected one of large size, which Henry, peeping over his shoulder, perceived had been carefully read and marked. The following passage was interlined :

“There is no liberty to be found in forsaking the service of God. As soon as the angels had sinned against God and had thrown off the yoke of obedience, they put on the chains of bondage ; they were in bondage to sin, and for sin. *Every sinner is a captive*—he cannot stir hand or foot in heavenly employments. *A saint only walks at liberty*—the service of God alone is freedom. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty ; and a changing of the chains of slavery for an heavenly activity. None but saints can run the ways of God’s commandments, and willingly wait upon their master ; and hence it is that they alone can perform duties, either delightful to him or to themselves. *The ways of obedience, which are torments to a sinner, are the pleasures of a saint.* That which one counts his yoke, the other esteems his privilege, and knows not how to live without the daily performing of them. And how comfortable is their condition, in having their chains of guilt beaten off by Christ ! As their services are, so is the treatment they receive from God,

which is that of sons, not of slaves and captives. They who were once strangers and enemies to God, are now his adopted children, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; as such they render holy duties to their heavenly Father. Their services are without fear; whereas, others are all their lifetime subject to bondage. How are sinners mistaken in thinking that liberty is inconsistent with holiness! A saint loses nothing but his bonds and fetters by becoming holy: nor is holiness a chain to any but those who know no other freedom than the house of bondage.*

Henry listened with much attention, while his friend read this passage, but did not seem inclined to carry on the conversation farther. Now, Leighton was one of those judicious people who never press the continuance of a subject longer than it appears to excite interest; and who was aware that when the most forcible points have been put forward, it is better to leave them to exercise their due power upon the mind, than to run the risk of diluting them by observations of less importance; he therefore, allowed the subject to drop, and prepared for retiring to rest, while Henry followed his example. Leighton read a psalm with his friend before they undressed, and the two young men then joined in social prayer.

The night was calm, and all being still around,

* These, and other passages of great force and beauty, extracted from old authors, are now republished in a valuable little work called "*Time, and the End of Time.*"

Henry slept soundly till about halfpast six, when he opened his eyes, and hearing a low murmuring sound, he drew the curtain gently aside, and perceived Leighton on his knees, with the Bible spread open before him, as if he had been seeking the divine light and assistance to understand the sacred word. Henry's conscience reproached him for continuing to slumber, while the vigilant soul of his friend had been awake, and calling on his God, perhaps for an hour before; and he immediately arose, dressed himself, and determined to be no longer behind-hand, but equal with him in constant prayer, and running the heavenly race.

So far Henry did well; but this quickness of feeling and action was but a trait in his natural character. Henry did not possess as much steadiness as promptitude, and therefore he made fewer advances in his Christian course than might have been expected. From natural temperament he was rapid in decision, whatever happened to be the impulse; but uncertain in perseverance, because it required a constraint upon himself whenever he disobeyed new impulses. Nature enjoyed the variety of new efforts, however severe, but revolted from the sameness of persevering duty, however easy. Henry was, therefore, not to judge of his Christian career and advancement by the energy of present feelings, because his nature was energetic, but by patient continuance in well-doing; because grace *alone* could give him constancy and endurance. Perhaps there is no better method for any Christian to ascertain how he stands

affected by nature and by grace, than to inquire what grace has done for him, to alter the current of nature; to know if it has made a sluggish mind *active*, a sensual mind *self-denying*, a selfish mind *disinterested*, a narrow mind *liberal*, a hardened mind *conscientious*. If these old things have passed away, and all things are become new, as St. Paul saith,* then may we feel assured that the believer is indeed born again, and there need be no further doubt about the matter. But if the essential bias and characteristics of the soul remain the same, only modified by a few circumstances—if there is not received internally such power from on high, as is manifestly a correcting and an influencing principle, ruling the whole man, and subduing even the strongest tendencies and besetments, there is reason to fear that the profession of religion, however fair its apparent progress, however plausible its pretensions, is in reality unsound in its basis.

Leighton begged of Henry to excuse him for an hour before breakfast, as he loved to walk out alone during that period, and promised to give him his whole time for the remainder of the day. Perhaps he thought it well also for Henry to be left a little to himself. The latter acquiesced, and the young men did not meet again till they joined the social party at family worship, preparatory to breakfast.

* 2 Cor. v. 17.

CHAPTER IV.

Oh! shame upon thee, listless heart,
 So sad a sigh to heave,
 As if thy Saviour had no part
 In thoughts that make thee grieve.
 Thy treasured hopes and raptures high
 Unmurmuring let them go;
 Nor grieve the bliss should quickly fly,
 Which Christ disdained to know.

CHRISTIAN YEAR.

AT breakfast, Mr. Leighton asked his family what were the arrangements for the day, and how it was proposed to entertain their young guest?

"Dear Sir," said Henry, "I require no other entertainment than just to be considered as a member of the family, and to be allowed to share in your several employments. I want to be intimate with you all, and with the whole parish; but let no unusual arrangements take place on my account."

Mr. Leighton smiled. "Well, my young friend," said he, "I really believe the best way for you to see the varieties and curiosities of this parish, such

as they are, will be to accompany each of us severally to our peculiar departments."

"There is nothing amusing or wonderful in everyday duties," said Miss Percy, "but there is much to interest those who heartily enter into them. Religious people, as well as others, have their favourite pursuits and peculiar tastes; but I trust that here, instead of interfering, they blend, like the colours of the rainbow, into one harmonious circle, embracing in its circuit, much of earth indeed, but *touching* heaven."

"That is prettily said, aunt Harriet," said Philip, "but I fear you have said too much for us all. I, at least, have much to do with earth, but little with heaven."

"My dear Philip," said his aunt, kindly, "why should it be thus with you? Are not the blessings, the privileges enjoyed by us all, equally open to you? Is it because there is no balm in Gilead, that you are not healed and made happy?"

Philip sighed, but he did not pursue the subject.

Mrs. Leighton then resumed upon the arrangements for the day. "As you wish to know how we usually proceed," said she, addressing Henry, "I will tell you our general plans: though we are not so rigid in adhering to a system, as not to vary them occasionally, when there is any good reason for doing so. Immediately after breakfast, Mr. Leighton retires to his study, where he remains for some hours. My son, Philip, generally reads or writes during the same period. My sister, and Elizabeth,

take the children into the drawing-room, and instruct them according to a regular plan of education, which includes some attention to music and drawing, though both of these are considered only of value, so far as they promote the general amusement of the family. Meanwhile I am engaged in household affairs. When my business is done, I join the school-room party; and sometimes we read and work, sometimes prepare employment for the poor, and sometimes adjourn to the garden, where the little ones weed and hoe, and do other things under our advice and direction. Once or twice a week my sister is absent on these occasions, having her own peculiar duties. At two we dine, and afterwards we generally go abroad to visit the rich or the poor, our schools or infirmary, as the case may be, each going wherever we are most needed. Then in the evenings"—

"Dear mother," cried Philip, "do not tell every particular to Henry, or you will leave him nothing to discover. Pray, let us unfold, like opening buds to his view (as aunt Harriet would say), that every day may reveal some unexpected charm."

Miss Percy laughed. "I am afraid," dear Philip, "that where there are only specimens of human nature to be unfolded, there will appear blights and blemishes as well as charms; nor would it be a slight one to cherish too high an opinion of ourselves, or to affect any lofty pretensions to the character of devoted and disinterested Christians. Alas! what are we in our best state, but unprofitable servants, only doing that which it is our duty to do."

“Well, good people,” said the senior Mr. Leighton, “settle your affairs whatever way you think best; but take care of our young friend, and make him feel as happy and as much at home as you can. I think it might amuse him to ride over with Philip to the Park, to see the beautiful waterfall and Lord G.’s classic temple in the woods. And in the afternoon, suppose he were to accompany sister Harriet to the village, and be introduced to one or two of her particular friends. I must claim Theophilus for *my* companion *this day* at least.

Henry and the whole party assented to this arrangement; and shortly after breakfast, horses were ordered for the two young men to ride to Naiad Park, a noble and extensive demesne, situated about three miles from Lilybrook, though a very small part of it was included in the parish. Lord G—— was seldom resident on this estate, as the neighbourhood was too quiet and retired to suit the taste of his lady and her daughters; and he seldom paid more than an annual visit, of about six weeks’ continuance, toward the latter end of summer. He was generally accompanied on these occasions, by a number of fashionable acquaintances, who came to admire the rural beauties of the park, abounding, as it did, with rich copses, clothing the declivities of gently sloping hills of luxuriant green, and affording the view of a noble waterfall at a little distance, pouring in broad torrents from a neighbouring height, and then breaking into beautiful rills, which intersected each other at different spots throughout the demesne. These rills

had given it the name of Naiad Park ; and it was the junction of two of them, which formed the stream that poured down through the village, and gave its principal beauty to the Rectory of Lilybrook.

Henry was fully capable of being charmed with the loveliness of such a place as this ; for his mind was of that character which completely enjoys the beauties of nature. But his companion and himself did not blend so harmoniously together, though, in some respects, in the formation of his mind and hasty mode of coming to conclusions, Philip resembled Henry much more closely than he did his brother, Theophilus. But the tint through which Henry viewed every object was *couleur de rose*, while that which predominated in the imagination of Philip was quite *grey*, if not absolutely *sable*. Of course their opinions differed widely as to everything they saw, although they were mutually desirous to please each other, and therefore made an effort to coincide as much as possible.

“ What a sweet day !” said Henry, as he mounted his horse. “ There is just cloud enough to keep off the burning glare of the sun, and wind enough to give freshness to the air without being disagreeable.”

“ I don’t know,” said Philip ; “ but the wind blows from the west, and threatens rain—the clouds are evidently collecting for it ; and, indeed, I have remarked that it always rains when we ride towards Naiad Park.”

“ Well, our ponies seem fleet and active,” said Henry, “ and I think they will soon bring us into

shelter. Besides, a shower, you know, will make the waterfall appear to more advantage. So let us away."

Philip mounted, and they proceeded some way, conversing on indifferent subjects; but Henry soon perceived that Philip was far from being happy. Amiable and sensitive to a degree in his own character, he felt afraid of betraying that he had discovered this secret, lest it should add a single pang to a restless and unsatisfied mind. Henry did not belong to the too common class of beings who are—

" Regardless of breaking or wounding a heart
Already to sorrow resigned ;"

but, on the contrary, felt the strongest wish to pour consolation, if possible, into the breast of his friend, in such a way as not to lead to a suspicion that he thought it was needful. Perhaps this was carrying delicacy too far, but we are detailing a *real character*. Henry talked to Philip first in a philosophical way, of the vanity and emptiness of all earthly pursuits. Philip assented, but with some expression of bitterness. Henry then put forth the strength of those principles which had been imbibed in childhood, and fostered by peculiar advantages in riper years. He reasoned with him upon the capacity of man for happiness of a quality superior to any thing which earth could afford; of this being a corroborative proof that Scripture accounts are true; showing that man was created in a higher state than that in which he is now found, and that his soul grasps after

enjoyments superior to any which are now within his reach. He then enlarged on the state of the *fallen* compared with that of the original man, and argued that the fallen man must have a *moral* renovation first, before he can be fitted for a reinstatement in his former privileges.

“And what is the point, my friend,” said Philip, “to which your argument tends?”

“Just to this, dear Philip: what our Lord said to Nicodemus, when he came to be instructed by him, ‘*Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*’* Nothing else, I feel assured, can restore the mind to true peace in this world, or make it meet for a heavenly inheritance in the next.”

Philip felt inclined to ask Henry was he himself sure of having been regenerated; but his acquaintance was too recent to permit him to put so close a question; but had he asked it, what ought to have been the reply? Reader, what do you think? Henry himself was far from being clear upon the subject, and it is, therefore, no wonder if you should be a little puzzled.

They arrived at the Park, rode across many silver streams, viewed the waterfall with much admiration, and were preparing to return, when Henry asked if there were not some curiosities to be seen in the mansion. Philip said there were; and he led Henry down the great avenue to the entrance. Part of the building was of very ancient date, and had

* John iii. 4.

been repaired, with modern additions, by the late Lord G——, a nobleman of some genius, but considerable eccentricity. In front stood a massive archway, flanked with two gloomy turrets. Passing underneath, they entered a spacious court, surrounded by light airy looking buildings, containing the principal apartments of the castle. Some of these had porticos and verandahs in the Italian taste, and flights of marble steps from the court-yard led thence into the interior. Henry was a little surprised at the incongruities of architecture; but Philip told him that the present lord was such a transient resident, the style of his house was a matter of little moment, and made it scarcely worth his while to undertake any expensive alteration. The whole building and its furniture, were therefore left in the same state in which they had been during the lifetime of his predecessors.

The young men now entered the grand saloon, and were amused with many specimens of the strange taste of the deceased nobleman. There were a few exquisite paintings of the old masters, but hung in company with those of such a very inferior order, that had they been put up as signs at the door of a country inn, no one would have deemed them dishonoured. China, in abundance, was piled in this spacious apartment, amidst busts of ancient philosophers, baronial helmets, pieces of armour, and the frippery of modern French furniture.

“Is it not strange,” remarked Henry, “that a nobleman of any sense or taste, should permit these incongruities to exist, for surely they must afford much

amusement, and perhaps supply matter for ridicule to his friends."

"My lord rather affects to be above the frivolous importance which is attached, in these days, to having things *comme il faut*," returned Philip. "He is also rather a humorist in his way; and says, it must be far more entertaining to strangers to witness the oddities of his castle, than the unvarying propriety and fitness which is apparent in the mansions of other people of rank or wealth. But, I confess, it disturbs and annoys me, to see so many beautiful objects spoiled by their grotesque position in these apartments, and by their association with those of a date and character so absurdly contrasted; but it is just a picture of the world," he continued sighing, "where every thing and every person seems out of place—the fairest and the worthiest mostly in the shade."

"Safer in the shade, perhaps, my sober friend = far less likely to spoil and fade, than if exposed to a loftier elevation. That beautiful tapestry, for instance, which is so concealed by those immense jars, would probably have faded in the sunshine long ago, only for that shelter; and it is now, I dare say, as bright as it was the day it first issued from the Gobelins manufactory."

"But to what purpose is it beautiful," said Philip, "if it is never seen, and of no use. And then it provokes me to see that beautiful head of Antinous, without a pedestal, actually lying on the ground, at the foot of a grim old baron's coat of mail—the pro-

erty, most likely, of a barbarian who never had one classical idea in his head. The fact is, I think, if persons and things are not exactly in the places they are fit for, the world would be better without either of them.

"Well said, my Cynic philosopher," said a voice behind the young men, which startled them both. They had their heads turned away from the door of the saloon, and had not perceived the entrance of the elder Leighton, and his son Theophilus, whom business had brought in the same direction; and who, knowing the intentions of Henry and Philip, had determined, on their return homeward, thus to surprise them. Both the lads were agreeably pleased at this addition to their party.—"I heard what you were saying as I came in, dear son," said Mr. Leighton; "but I think you have forgotten *who* is the best judge, as to the arrangement of human affairs. It is true, all things appear almost in as great disorder in the system of the world, particularly its moral system, as we perceive in the arrangement of the apartments in which we are moving: but shall we therefore conclude, that if *we* had the power to transpose them, things would be in a better state? No, my son; the wise, unerring Ruler of all, has indeed permitted the introduction of sin to be the introduction of disorder also; but He has so arranged, that these very evils should, in many instances, prove their own corrective."

"How is that, my father?" said Philip.

"Why, not to go deeper into the subject, for

which this, perhaps, is neither the time nor place, I would only instance the benefits that arise from labor to the unlettered man, and from affliction to the mind that is turning to God. In the first case, as to labor; how hard does it appear that some individuals should be compelled to toil their whole lives, to earn a scanty pittance of subsistence, while they are ministering to the wants of the lazy and luxurious? Yet are they not really in possession of as much calm enjoyment as their idler neighbours, and are they not mercifully preserved, by constant occupation, from the wild and wicked schemes which would inevitably rise in their hearts, and break out into activity, if they had leisure to put them into execution?—And then, as to affliction, is there any believing child of God, who cannot join with David in saying, “It is good for me that I have been afflicted.” The sufferings that withdraw us from society, and excite the pity and commiseration of many kind friends, who wonder why it is thus with us, are often the harbingers of tender mercy, to wean us from the world, and to make us feel that here we have no rest. We would, many of us, like to be placed on a pedestal, like your head of Antinous, thinking ourselves calculated to adorn a high elevation, and that nothing but bad management, or bad taste, could possibly throw us into the shade. But God may have other designs, with regard to us; He may intend us for another situation altogether; or perhaps, pass us by, as instruments of no value on earth, still reserving us to be gathered in among his precious *things hereafter.*”

"I dont know, my father," said Philip, "whether I am prepared to agree with you, through all your view of the subject ; for I have seen, in the course of even my own short life, such instances of extraordinary perversion of what appeared to me to be most right, most just and fit, in the arrangements of society, that I am by no means satisfied. Take your own case, for instance ; were you not promised, by Lord H., whose tutor you were in college, that the very first living in his gift, that fell vacant, should be yours ? and has he not already disposed of *three*, (one of them extremely valuable,) to persons of inferior merit, and to whom he owed no obligation ? And then, my aunt Harriet ; is there a more lovely or estimable woman in the world ? One more calculated to adorn society, or to serve the cause of religion ? And what is she ? A blighted creature ; obscure, unknown !" Philip felt warm, and suddenly interrupted himself.

Mr. Leighton and Theophilus could not forbear smiling. Henry actually laughed : but Mr. Leighton again resumed the subject.

"Thank you, my son, for your compliment to me : but I assure you I think myself just as comfortably settled at Lilybrook, and as much in the way of happiness, as if I was in possession of Lord H.'s living at Tottenham. And as to your aunt, why make such a lamentation over her ? She has had her sorrows, indeed ; and a far different lot seemed originally appointed for her ; but her tears have long been dried, and I believe she is as happy and

as useful, in her present situation, as she would have been in any other. It has not been our own choice, perhaps, to be circumstanced just as we now appear; but I cannot allow that we are *losers*, because we could not be *choosers*. And you, my Philip, when you are a little older, and more acquainted with life, will, I trust, come to be of the same opinion."

Henry pressed the arm of his friend Theophilus, and looked sympathizingly at Philip; but no words were interchanged. The parties walked on through the galleries, and the subject was not resumed.

Philip asked his father by what chance he had come in the direction of the Park? He said he had been sent for, to visit the wife of the game-keeper, living at the Park-gate, who was dangerously ill. He had often wished to get admittance into this man's family, but had not been able to succeed before this day. They were very irregular in attendance at church; never joined his weekly evening lecture, though held in a school-house only half a mile from their dwelling; and were, in other respects, very unsatisfactory persons to deal with. I was therefore delighted, said he, at this opportunity of visiting them upon their own summons, as I knew I could now deliver a faithful message."

"But was it not provoking to be interrupted," asked Henry; "for I know that you and Theophilus intended to spend this morning in particular study together?"

"Why, perhaps, I would have preferred unbroken seclusion and retirement; but, my young friend,

ought I to regard a message of this kind, which is the same thing as a call of God to duty, in the light of an interruption? My object in seeking seclusion is, I humbly trust, to become more acquainted with his divine will, that I may be more ready to do it; and if he is pleased to require my time or services in another way, when I am thus waiting before him, am I not simply to arise and obey, whether it happens to be my fancy or not?"

Theophilus looked earnestly at Henry while his father was speaking: he continued—

"I have learned, that obedience and submission are the grand practical features in a Christian's life here below; the active and passive requirements of the yoke of Christ. To some temperaments the *active* seems easy; but it will not do, unless we love our Master so well as to be willing to lie by, and sink into insignificance, if such be His will. To others the passive is the easiest duty; but they must learn to crucify self-indulgence, to conquer indolence, to rouse dormant powers, and put every faculty into action for the service of Christ, when he sends them forward to fight under his banner. It will be little matter, in eternity, in which capacity we have submitted to Him and performed His will."

"Dont you think, my father," said Theophilus, "that individuals are apt to imagine they can serve the Lord only in one way, and *that* one, the way most agreeable to themselves?"

"I think it is a common error, and not only inju-

rious to the person who is under such a delusion— but it tends to diminish Christian love and unity— making such a one esteem every individual who differs from him, as acting contrary to the path of Christian duty. But these mistakes arise much from narrowness of mind, from the habit of viewing Christianity in one light only, from setting up our own judgment as the standard of right and wrong, instead of taking the work of God, and trying the opinions we hold, by this unerring test. Oh, how often have I heard persons exclaim, “I am very fond of such a one; I like excessively to hear him preach, for he holds exactly the *same views* as I do;” or, “I do not like such a one; I never go to his church, for his views on ‘the Millennium,’ or the ‘Personal reign,’ or the ‘salvation of the heathen,’ are quite different from mine, and therefore I don’t want to hear what he has to say.” Now, is it right to fix ourselves so unalterably in some position, which we imagine to be the only safe one, looking forth, as from the window of a turret, upon the whole of Christendom, and imagining those only are right who adopt every doctrine, and see every object in the vast scene, exactly as we do?”

“But, Sir,” said Henry, “is it not needful to have our principles fixed, and our minds made up, lest we should be at the mercy of every new teacher, and incur the danger against which we are warned by St. Paul; *that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind*

*of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive?"**

"Surely : but it is the fundamental truths of the Gospel the Apostle here alludes to ; those which, in their nature, are *essential* to the believer, and without which he cannot be saved : for instance, the doctrines of the total depravity and ruin of man ;† his restoration, through the *free grace* of God, without any merit or qualification whatever, on his own part ;‡ the necessity of regeneration, to enable a man to enter into the kingdom of God :§ of a renewed heart and affections, to fit him for a participation in the enjoyments of that kingdom.|| These, and some few other particulars, are the foundation stones of the Christian temple, and cannot be dispensed with ; but, happily, Scripture is so plain upon them, that the simplest mind need not err. But it is not on these points you hear the most ardent controversies ; nor is it on account of differences concerning them that one teacher is preferred, and another rejected. No. The differences are, chiefly, such as these : one individual holds the doctrine, that the Lord Jesus died only for a small portion of mankind ; and another, that he died for all : and both parties produce Scripture in support of their tenets. One will teach, that the communion of the Lord's Supper is only to be shared with those whom he has reason to consider believers ; ano-

* Ephes. iv. 14. † Rom. iii. 10. ‡ Ephes. ii. 8, 9. Titus, iii. 5. § John, iii. 3. || Rom. viii. 9-17 ; Heb. xii. 14.

ther will contend that it ought to be administered indiscriminately, to all who profess themselves to be Christians, without attempting to judge of the state of the heart. Some Christians think it becoming a minister, to be distinguished by a white surplice, band, and perhaps hood: others think these appendages are remnants of Babylonish pollution, and allow only a black gown: and others, again, disregard all such outward distinctions, and allow their teachers to appear merely in the dress to which they are usually accustomed. Now, my dear young friend, you may remark that religious dissensions generally arise from no greater causes than these, and the bitterness and animosity with which they are carried on, perhaps have their source in the extreme meanness of man's capacity, which sees importance in circumstances that are of no real moment. We are, alas! too apt to forget the contemplation of those sublime and heart-affecting truths of the Gospel, which would produce enlargement of intellect, and universal love, while we consume our powers and energies, in contention about trifles, of which it matters little, in a practical point of view, which way they are decided."

Theophilus seemed to take the same views with his father. The other young men were silent; perhaps feeling their incompetence, from want of experience or consideration of the subject, either fully to coincide with Mr. Leighton, or to state any reasons for dissent. However, the time spent in Lord G.'s mansion, in looking at his curiosities, and in

conversation, passed so rapidly, that the party did not recollect the dinner hour, and it had elapsed some time, before they set out on their return home.

Mrs. Leighton received them with a pleasant countenance, and told them how late it was ; but though this excellent woman was very methodical, and loved to keep order, and have every thing done in its proper time, yet she did not indulge herself in the least complaint, or preside at her table in a gloomy manner, because she had been put out of her way ; for she had learned the same divine lesson as her husband, that it is often the Lord's plan, to suffer interruptions to arise which oppose our own will, and that if we submit quietly to this cross, (and every orderly person knows what a cross it is to have time apparently lost, and arrangements broken,) we honor Him more, and serve Him better than by the whole burnt offerings of self-instituted sacrifices and services.—Miss Percy and Elizabeth were prevented, by the lateness of the dinner-hour from going, as usual, on one of their parochial excursions ; but they made arrangements with Henry that he should accompany them some other day.

CHAPTER V.

Why should we faint and fear to live alone

Since all alone, so heav'n has willed, we die,
Not even the tenderest heart, and next our own,
Knows half the reasons why we smile or sigh.
For if one heart in perfect sympathy
Beat with another, answering love for love,
Weak mortals all entranced, on earth would lie,
Nor listen for those purer strains above.

KEBLE.

THE first time that Henry found himself alone with his friend, Theophilus, he recurred to the conversation that had passed in the morning at the Park, and particularly to the hint Philip had dropped concerning his aunt Harriet. "If it be not an intrusive inquiry," said he, "I should be very glad to know why he seemed to lament over her, as if she were not happy; for I think I never saw a more cheerful, contented, or useful being than she is?"

"Poor Philip sees every thing, at present, through a mist," replied Theophilus, "or he would not have uttered such thoughts respecting my aunt. But, Henry, cheerful and beaming as she now is, and has

been for many years, she has gone through much sorrow; and I think I may venture to tell you some of the circumstances, especially as they may not only interest you, but help to convey some useful instruction.

"My mother was the eldest of three sisters; Mary was the name of the second, and Harriet of the third. The two last were much younger than my mother, and were only a year different in age; they were, consequently, brought up together from childhood, and were peculiarly attached, not so much from an equality of mind as a sympathy of sentiment. They received their education through the same sources; enjoyed and loved the society of the same friends; and though my aunt Harriet excelled more in the higher branches of art, in composition and poetical imagination, my aunt Mary was fully able to enjoy and appreciate every thing of the kind. The faculties of the one were more of an active order; of the other passive: but their characters blended so harmoniously into one, that there never was the least disunion between them. If, in childhood, one of them happened to be in sorrow, or disgrace, the other never left her, or seemed to enjoy any pleasure, till her sister could participate in it also. And if one was sick, the other was her constant companion, nurse, or playfellow, never wishing or seeking for any society till the beloved sister was able to enter into the same scenes again.

"In the course of time the sisters grew up, and my mother was married, and left her home for this village.

“ Two years afterwards, my aunt Mary was introduced to a young gentleman named John Melcomb, a lawyer of considerable talent, but small fortune. His appearance was pleasing ; and further acquaintance making her assured that his disposition was as amiable as his external figure was prepossessing, she permitted his addresses, and it was finally arranged that at some convenient time, when his prospects at the bar should appear a little more encouraging, they should be united in marriage. In the mean time, a younger brother named William, an officer, who had been long absent with his regiment on foreign service, returned to his family, and found John under the circumstances I have mentioned, of engagement to my aunt Mary. Being introduced to her, and liking her society, he naturally became intimate with other members of the family, and my aunt Harriet attracted his particular attention. I was then only six years old, but well do I remember that most interesting young man. Of beauty I was no very competent judge at that early age ; but I recollect the beaming sweetness of his countenance, the fair breadth of his white forehead, contrasted with the faint bronze of the lower parts of his face, and the shining brown of his short wavy hair, through which, in childish sport, I used to twist my fingers. He was extremely fond of children, and used to take them upon his knee, allow them to touch, in admiration, the glowing ornaments of his uniform, and explain ten times over, if they wished it, the use of every part of it which had a use. Oh how we loved

him to join in our sports ; so gentle was he, so considerate, so animated. My aunt was equally fond of children, and this mutual taste often brought them into the same society—they became gradually intimate. A similarity of sentiment, of intellectual enjoyments, of kindly feelings, drew their affections together, and it soon appeared likely that a double union would be the result of this acquaintance between the two Melcombs and the Miss Percys."

"What a pleasant arrangement that would have been," said Henry. "I almost dread to hear that it was prevented."

"In the eye of human wisdom it did appear pleasant, indeed ; for there seemed to be every feeling and disposition necessary for conjugal happiness, in the minds of the individuals who were so attached. But oh, my dear Henry, how blind are we to that which is best for us, and how foolishly would we often choose, if the arrangements of our lot were left to our own decision. I am not going now to make a long story, but I will tell you the principal occurrences which happened before either of those marriages could take place. John Melcomb went upon circuit, in the exercise of his profession as a barrister ; the weather was excessively hot at the time, being the summer assizes, and he had much fatiguing business. He was seized with a dangerous fever, and not being in a state fit for removal, his brother William was sent for, who went, without loss of time, accompanied by a skilful physician. For some days afterwards we received rather favourable accounts, and hope

was stronger than fear. Mary, however, seldom left her room, and seemed quite unable to bear society while she was in such an agonizing state of suspense. Nor was Harriet much less interested or uneasy. With what earnestness did they watch for each day's post—seizing the expected letter with nervous trepidation, and scarcely able to decipher the lines through their tears. My mother was with them at the time; and, child as I was, I entered into the sorrow of those I loved, as far as I was capable of understanding its source. Sometimes my aunt Mary talked in a wild way of going to him and dying with him. Sometimes she sat in a stupor most of the day, scarcely able to speak a word; and on other occasions, when the accounts seemed more favourable, she would appear unnaturally elated.

“Well, the day at length arrived that was decisive; a letter came, and, as usual, with a red seal, so that no unwonted alarm was excited by its appearance. It was addressed to Harriet, and was framed in the most cautious terms, but contained the fearful news so long dreaded, yet scarcely anticipated, that the fever had taken an unfavourable turn, under which the constitution had given way; and that the handsome, interesting, and amiable John Melcomb was now no more. The anguish of the brother who wrote this intelligence, was only exceeded by that of her, who was to have been his bride. She never held up her head afterwards. She sank into a state of melancholy, from which nothing could rouse her; and it

might be said of her, that her sun went down at noon. She made many efforts to recover herself, seeing that she was a source of misery to all those that loved her. After a few weeks had passed, in which she remained in complete seclusion, William Melcomb and my aunt Harriet endeavoured to attract her into society, and to amuse her by change of scene and cheerful conversation; but to her, all scenes of amusement and recreation were no more than a banquet would be to the dead: her pale cheek and colourless eye received no beam from the rainbow tints around her; and she pined away, solitary in the midst of company, feeding on the bitterness of blighted affections. Often at meals has she tried to listen and look pleased when she perceived the kind and affectionate attempts of her sister to interest her; but the faint smile was generally followed by a whitening streak on her faded countenance, and a gush of sobs which were alarming to those around her, and which she was too feeble to repress. My aunt Harriet saw what would be the consequence of this deep grief, if indulged; yet where to find a remedy she knew not. It has been said by some that there is no such thing as a broken heart, but that the idea has its existence only in the fictions of romance; but, Henry, I believe it to be a sad reality in the true tales of real life; and that any person of strong susceptibility, whose heart is not pre-occupied by devotedness to God, is liable to become the victim of idolatrous affections. If we have given up all the powers and capacities of the

soul to the service and contemplation of one particular object—is it wonderful, when that object torn from our embrace, that every fibre and nerve with which it was entwined, should wither by the separation, or that the constitution should receive shock from which it is unable to rally? Such was the case of poor Mary Percy; nor did she know any better hope, any higher object on which to build a fairer and more substantial temple of happiness. She knew not the remedy for her soul's anguish, and hence it completely undermined her constitution and prepared the way for the inroads of consumption. The short, dry cough with which she was now attacked, proclaimed the necessity of medical advice; and the physician who was called in, recommended immediate change of air and scene. Accordingly she was brought down here to my father's vicarage, accompanied by her sister Harriet, who never quitted her pillow, night or day, and whose gentle and tender attentions soothed the affliction, though it could not restore the dying energies of a breaking heart. My father, though some time in the ministry, had but lately become acquainted with the experience of religion in his own soul; his example and Christian influence with my mother, had also proved a blessing to her, and it was with the anxious hope of being able to pour balm into the wounded spirit of their sister, that they had urged the poor invalid to accept the asylum of their house. I believe it was not long before my aunt Harriet's mind yielded to the impression of divine truths. In the seclusion

of her sister's sick room, sad and depressed in spirit, without any taste or inclination to relieve the melancholy of her situation by lighter thoughts, she was induced to look into her Bible with unusual attention. At first she felt a strange reluctance and distaste to its contents, yet at the same time an inward attraction to persevere in the study, for which she could not account. She saw a great deal of matter in it which she could not comprehend, yet felt convinced that it was necessary for her salvation that comprehension should be given. She read therein the character and lineaments of the children of God, and was astonished to find that she had not a feeling in common with them. She found, on examination, that she had no real love to Christ; no true abhorrence of sin; no strong sense of its evil; no hungering and thirsting after righteousness; no assurance of being reconciled to God through the blood of Christ; no certainty that if death came upon her suddenly, it would find her soul washed, and sanctified, and made ready for the kingdom of God, and that her body would fall asleep in sure and certain hope of a blessed resurrection to eternal life. These discoveries led her to see there was some meaning in the expression, 'Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.' She asked many questions upon these subjects, and she has often told me that the chief burden of my father's advice was, to entreat her to pray for the light of the Holy Spirit, that He might guide and illuminate her mind, and reveal to her the hidden things of God. 'When you

find a difficulty, dear Harriet,' he would say, 'as to any passage of scripture, confess your ignorance to the Lord Jesus, and make it a matter of prayer. When you feel your heart cold and indisposed to prayer, confess your coldness and indifference, and *pray* that you may be *enabled to pray*. When you feel perplexed and full of unbelieving doubts, make these doubts and perplexities a fresh reason for going to the throne of grace, and thus you will be sure to obtain blessings and baffle your grand enemy. His aim with every soul that is endeavouring to escape his power, is to keep it from Jesus; knowing that, if once it reaches that sacred ark, it is secured from him for ever. On this account he is often more active when we first set out, than afterwards, and many, many does he retain for sorrowful months or years from arriving at that state of peace and assurance, which belongs to the children of God.' She listened to this advice, and acted upon it, and soon felt in her heart the sweet consolation of having believed in the Saviour. She now tried to bring her poor, sorrowing sister to seek the same sure healing balm, but she would not hearken, and refused to be comforted. She said, that He could not be a God of love, who had dealt, as she thought, so hardly with her, in taking away the dearest object of her affections; and she indulged in the rebellious spirit of that prophet who said, 'I do well to be angry,' when he contemplated his smitten gourd.

"Meantime, a circumstance unexpectedly occurred which brought both the sisters into a new state of

trial. William Melcomb, who, as the accepted and beloved choice of my aunt Harriet, was frequently at the vicarage, received orders to join his regiment, which was about to proceed to the East Indies. The possibility of such an event had not occurred to the minds of any of the parties, and it threw them all into a state of excitement and perplexity such as you can easily imagine. The first and most natural idea which suggested itself to the mind of Melcomb, was to obtain my aunt Harriet's consent to an immediate marriage, that she might accompany him; but this plan, which under happier circumstances she would probably have concurred with at once, now threw her into an agonizing conflict with her best affections. Her beloved sister, in deep affliction, in languishing health, without the encouraging hope of an enlightened Christian; could she leave *her* to pine away to the grave, without the consolation of her sisterly love and tenderness, through the nights and days of wearisome sickness and despondency? or could she suffer the chosen companion of her heart, her affianced husband, to go abroad to a foreign land, to brave the chances of an unhealthy climate and severe duty, without having her society as a resource in the absence of all other friends, or one to whisper in his attentive ear, the sounds of eternal truth, whereby his principles might be strengthened and his capacity for enjoyment enlarged. Above all, she thought of the possibility of their meeting no more on earth, if now compelled to part, and she shrunk with agony from the con-

templation. When poor Melcomb made the proposal to her, he observed the blanching cheek and tremulous quiver of her lip, though she uttered no words.

“‘What am I to suppose from this manner—Harriet?’ he said, taking her hand; ‘have I done any thing to forfeit your affection, or to change the sentiments you have always seemed to favour me with?’

“‘No, no!’ she replied, rising with energy from her seat, though unable to repress her tears; ‘believe me I am unaltered—believe my friendship the same as ever; but, William—my sister!’

“Melcomb dropped her hand, and walked rapidly across the room in an agitated manner.

“‘Yes, you prefer your sister and her happiness to mine. I forgive you, Harriet; you love me as much, perhaps, as you think right; but you know not what true affection means, or it would absorb every other consideration.’

“My aunt saw that he was not in a state to be reasoned with, and she knew his nature was not a selfish one, but that a jealous pang had added poignancy to disappointed hope.

“She turned to him her meek, gentle eye, with a look half reproachful, and only said—

“‘William, remember my sister has a *widowed* heart.’

“Melcomb was instantly touched by the tender allusion to his brother; he wept like an infant, with his head leaning on the chair, till, almost ashamed

of what he considered an unmanly exhibition of emotion, he made a desperate effort to recover himself, and again approaching my aunt, entreated her pardon for his hasty expressions. Yet again he urged his wishes; he argued the desolate state of his existence if he went abroad without her—the length of time that must elapse before his return—and finally proposed the wild plan of persuading poor Mary to accompany them, with the chance of thus prolonging her life. My aunt Harriet tried to listen to him with composure, and often did her countenance betray the varying emotions of her mind, as she balanced between conflicting duties and conflicting affections; but he obtained little encouragement from her replies, though as yet he did not choose to think their unfavourable import decisive.

“My poor aunt, Mary Percy, in the mean time, perceived that something of a private and distressing nature was harassing the mind of her sister; and as she had been told that William Melcomb was shortly to join his regiment, she soon guessed the real cause, and determined, with true and disinterested fortitude, to urge Harriet to accompany him. As to her own capability of travelling with them, she felt that was out of the question, and that it would be adding a painful incumbrance to the party; so she scrupled not to sacrifice the few remaining hours of consolation she might have derived from the society of Harriet, to her wish for securing what she believed to be most for her happiness.

“My mother has told me that nothing could be

more affecting than the scenes which afterwards took place between the sisters. In the absence of all selfish motives, each of them thought most for the circumstances of the other, and refused to be outdone in the generous sacrifice. But there was one to whom the whole affair appeared in a different light. Young, enthusiastic, and full of romantic devotedness to the object of his attachment, he was incapable of appreciating the high principle which made Harriet ready to sacrifice her present interest to the feelings of her sister; he wanted that noble refinement [so seldom met with but in the female mind,] which totally forgets self when anxious for the happiness of another, or rather finds its deepest gratification in the enjoyment it has thus purchased, by the price of its own relinquishments. He judged hastily and unfairly, that Harriet felt too little regard for him to be the partner of his foreign toils, and under this prejudice quitted the glebe one morning early, without taking a farewell of any of the family, leaving only a few cool lines for my father, stating the impression he was under, and that it was his intention to join his regiment immediately at Portsmouth; his note farther stated, that he felt, in taking this hasty leave, he was doing unkindness to no one; for he could not flatter himself he would be an object of regret to those, who could so readily reconcile themselves to abandon him. It was necessary to show this letter to my aunt Harriet, to account for Melcomb's disappearance. It cost her inexpressible anguish; for she felt her motives were misunderstood. She

entreated my father to write to him immediately and undertake her cause, stating his own impression as to the sincere and unaltered state of her affections, and putting before him the very peculiar and painful circumstances which made her sister Mary so imperative a charge. This letter was written and dispatched very soon after Melcomb had left the glebe ; but as an answer was waited for in vain, and they received news shortly after, that the regiment had embarked, it was feared he had never received it ; and my aunt Harriet had this additional pang heaped upon her other trials, that he had left her in displeasure, and might never more be reconciled."

"Poor Miss Percy," exclaimed Henry, when Leighton arrived at this part of the story. "No wonder Philip said she was blighted."

"But you have not heard all the story yet," resumed his friend. Now indeed had come the time when she was in some degree put to the trial as to whether the strength and moral courage she appeared to have received from the Bible, were a *romance* or *reality*. Had they been the former, this deep affliction of spirit would have undermined the air-built fabric, and left her without a hope or consolation ; and so far from being a source of comfort to her sister, she would herself have become dependent for such consoling sympathy from others ; and mark, my dear Henry, the consequence of acting on high principle : regardless of selfish considerations, my aunt Mary, who had hitherto sternly wrapped herself up in her own grief, and refused even to admit

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for a moment the contemplations of a better hope and a better world, which Harriet so oft and so tenderly had tried to put before her, was roused from this state of selfish absorption, by seeing the gentle, uncomplaining, yet bitter endurance of her sister, under a trial nearly as great as her own, and one of which her sisterly affection had been the cause. She therefore tried to receive, with more than former interest, all the soothing actions which Harriet was still ever wont to pay, and as she saw that nothing seemed to gratify or console her more, than to listen with apparent interest to Scripture-readings or religious topics, Mary was now the first to propose and introduce both. Harriet did not suspect the cause of this change; but inwardly blessing the Lord for such an opening of mercy in the midst of her gloomy sky, and praying that His loving hand might be made yet more manifest, in His changing the heart of her dear sister, before her eyes became closed for ever, she became more inwardly composed, and even her step and air assumed something of its former alacrity. Her prayer, too, was heard and answered: the proud rebellious heart of poor Mary, which had so long resisted the Lord, and determined to be angry, became broken and melted under the influence of that Holy Power, which only bruises that He may heal again. She received a deep and most painful sense of the depraved and ruined condition of her soul, and for some time seemed scarcely able to withdraw her eyes from the contemplation, even to see the

glorious remedy provided for all such cases by the Great Physician. Her mind was of a more unyielding nature than my aunt Harriet's ; it resisted the light of evidence with greater determination, and was therefore slower in coming to that clear conviction of truth which gives the sinner assurance of pardon, and makes him feel a personal interest in the work of the atonement. But firmly as her unbelief had raised its barrier, the King of Glory came with greater power and forced her to let Him in. Oh, glorious entry ! Oh, triumph of redeeming love over the work of Satan and of sin.

“Well, Henry, I must not make my story too long. Aunt Mary's days were now drawing fast to a close, but brighter and brighter grew her prospects as she approached her eternal home. Aunt Harriet was constantly with her, and though feeling, as nature always feels when attending the dying couch of those best beloved, yet *she*, too, experienced a genuine joy in anticipating with her sister, the haven of rest where she was soon to be, and in praising the name of Him, who, through the furnace of affliction, had led them to seek his favor, and to exchange their perishing garlands of earthly flowers for the assured inheritance of those which never fade away. My father and mother's society was a great comfort to them ; and once when my aunt Harriet was remarking how great a blessing my father had been to the whole family, and what a comfort it must be to my mother to be united to such a Christian friend and fellow-helper, Mary turned round to her and said :

‘Harriet, love, you and I might have had our hearts’ desire, and been united to those who are now far away, if a providential chain of events had not interfered to prevent entanglements, which might have kept our best affections for ever from the Lord. As for me, my destiny was settled when I had no power to choose, and when I would not have been a helpmeet for any true Christian: but you, dear love, were already under solemn engagement to one who in many respects deserved the preference, at the time when the Lord called you by his grace to be a follower of His. You were entangled with a worldly object: with one who, however amiable, could not have had a feeling in common with you upon the subjects of your highest hopes and interests; the Bible to him would have been, what it was so lately to me, not the meat and drink of the soul, but a mere source of moral instruction or intellectual amusement, and you would have pined away in secret sorrow at the uncongeniality of your mutual thoughts and feelings. Therefore, the separation which you could not or would not have managed for yourself, One wiser than you, my sister, has undertaken for you. Your sisterly love was the point on which it turned; for *my* sake you made the sacrifice, and I know you will reap a blessing for it, my Harriet.’ My poor aunt Harriet could not restrain her tears; she fell on her sister’s neck, exclaiming, ‘I have already reaped it abundantly, my sister, in seeing how sweetly you have gathered consolation and strength from the divine and living word of God as *revealed in Scripture.*’

“But,” said Mary, ‘I have yet more to promise you. I am sure you will yet see our dear William Melcomb a partaker in the same hope and joy. He was separated from you for a while, that he might be restored to you for ever. I do not ask, do you pray for him? I know you do; and my brother and sister here, they pray for him also, and I too, offer up my feeble cries on his behalf: and think you, my Harriet, so many hearts would be instructed by the Spirit to ask this blessing, if He did not intend to hear and to answer? I shall not live to see your union, Harriet; but when it takes place it will be a blessed one, and an eternal one. A union not of mere worldly affections, of earthly anticipations, of temporal interests, but of heavenly, holy feelings. It will be as the marriage of Cana, in Galilee; the Lord will be bidden as a guest, and the water of carnal felicity will be turned into the new wine of His Father’s kingdom.’

“My aunt Harriet was too much affected and excited to reply; but my father said he thought there was a strange degree of prophetic anticipation in Mary Percy’s words on this occasion. She did not survive many days afterwards, growing gradually weaker and weaker, till her last sighs were breathed upon the bosom of her faithful sister.


“Her death took place about eight months after that of John Melcomb, and nearly five, after the departure of William for the East Indies. My aunt Harriet felt her loss most severely; she missed the fatigue and occupation, which had been the

principal employment of her time and thoughts for so long a period ; the tender little attentions, *which* she was for ever studying ; the sweet conversations they had had together upon heavenly themes ; the mutual aid they had given to each other in prayer, and in the enjoyment of the precious word of God. It has been said, and truly said, that when we feel a vacuum after the loss of any creature good, it is a sign that our hearts were too much wrapped up in it, and that God was not in all our thoughts ; and Christian experience too often affords instances of this, where the children of God feel a miserable craving after what they have lost, instead of being at once filled to overflowing by Divine love, in proportion as they are emptied of the creature. The regenerate mind, however, mourns over this its depravity, and conscious that no other good can satisfy its immortal capacity, turns again to its rest, and, after a little while, ceases to weep. Thus it was with my dear aunt Harriet ; through Divine grace, she was enabled, in a short time, to resume the active duties of society. She united with my father and mother in promoting all the wise and benevolent schemes they had planned for the good of the parish, and never appeared to think that she had any particular cause for grief, or title to sympathy.

“ Yet there was a worm in the bud. She could not forget William Melcomb, her first, her only beloved. She had heard nothing from him since his departure. One year—two years passed away. ‘*Hope deferred made the heart sick,*’ and she had

given up all expectation of ever seeing or hearing from him again. She knew his regiment had arrived safely at Bombay, and had once seen his name among the list of promotions; but further than this she heard not, till the latter end of the third summer after his departure. A letter then arrived, containing news most singular and most interesting indeed. It commenced with entreating her forgiveness for his unkindness and impetuosity in leaving her as he had done, with a complete explanation of his feelings on the occasion, and a full and hearty condemnation of the selfishness which had led him to draw such unjust conclusions, and to hurry away in the manner described. The letter went on to unfold a change, which had taken place in his heart, of the most genuine description, and the consequent return of affection to her, whose mind and principles, he felt assured, were most calculated to make him a happy husband, and strengthen him in his Christian path. Some of the particulars relating to his conversion were remarkable. The chaplain of the regiment to which he belonged, happened to be a very devoted and exemplary clergyman; he frequently took an opportunity of conversing with the officers upon serious subjects, and young Melcomb was led to pay him more than ordinary attention. He confessed in his letter, that the chaplain's conversation had often made him feel uncomfortable; that he could not get rid of the idea that there was a *reality* in religion, and that if it was a reality, every person who rejected and despised it was in an unsafe state. He continued to attend the preach-

ing, and seek the society of the chaplain, for some time, and by degrees his mind became enlightened as to the doctrines of Scripture, though he felt far from assured, that he had any personal interest in the glorious revelation of redemption through a crucified Redeemer. It happened one very hot evening that he felt languid and unwell, and strolled down in his light calico dressing-gown to the sea shore. The waves that beat on the coast of India are tremendously high, rolling in vast volumes upward from the Indian ocean, and breaking on the coral rocks with a magnificence unknown in our milder seas. Here Captain Melcomb stood for some time, watching the breaking surf, till he observed a point of jutting rock on which the sea, every now and then, threw a swelling wave, and retiring, left it to scatter in a vast spray many yards around. The idea struck him that it would be an agreeable mode of taking a shower bath; and scrambling forward among the rocks, he took his station near the extending point. Scarcely, however, had he time to congratulate himself on the change and coolness of his position, when an immense billow, black and voluminous, gathered itself on high, and, approaching the spot, swept him from the surface, and hurried him into the bosom of the great deep. Expert as he was in swimming, here was no opportunity to exercise his art. The waves were so high and the rocks so inaccessible and pointed, that he saw no hope whatever; he gave himself up as a lost man; and now came upon him, with full force, the idea of eternity. '*Eternity*,' thought he; 'am I, then, rushing into the



presence of God thus unprepared; unwashed from my sins; unfit for heaven. What will become of me?—whither shall I go?—who will save me?' The thought then came into his mind—'Believe in the Lord Jesus, and He will save thee.' He answered, mentally, 'I will believe; though I perish I will believe. Lord Jesus help me.'

"Immediately a sweet calm came over his spirit; he no longer struggled with the waves; he had committed himself to the Ruler of them, and he said he felt himself instantly secured by the arm of Divine love. His next thought was, 'Lord take me, I am ready to go to thee, return me not to a sinful world; let me be thine now and ever.' But the work of grace was not thus to be accomplished; and the Lord did not, at that time, answer this prayer. A wave, great and high and mighty as the former, now raised him again upon its huge surf, and cast him upon the rock, near the place where he had been taken up a few minutes before, bruised, wounded, and bleeding, 'tis true, but become a new man.* He threw on his dressing gown, and ran home with new-born strength of mind, though with a macerated body; and if he had not perceived that the few who met him avoided him, with a look of fear and wonder at his sanguine dress, he could scarcely have restrained himself from telling them all the wonders that had been made known to his soul when engulfed in the deep. When a few days,

* This is a fact.

however, had passed, and he was sufficiently recovered to appear again in society, he showed to all his astonished friends and companions that he was become a new creature. To the chaplain alone he confided the peculiarity of the circumstances, and the good man rejoiced over him with the most unfeigned delight, seeing how genuine and how lively was his zeal for God. Melcomb made no hesitations, no temporising doubts as to the course he should pursue; he resolved to be at once decided, notwithstanding the smiles and scoffs of his brother officers. Some of them said it was a fancy, which would soon wear off; that he was a romantic young man, full of unthuiasim and whim, and that it would be better to let it wear itself out than to oppose him.

Had their theory been correct, they reasoned rightly; for nothing excites and keeps up mere romantic enthusiasm so much as opposition; but genuine principle alone can bear the steady, cold, unexciting indifference, of those with whom we are associated. Melcomb's heart and soul were all however, engaged in the right cause; he neither cared for scoffs, opposition, or indifference; and in the course of a little time some who had treated him injuriously at first, became his warm friends and adherents, and *one*, even an inquirer after the same truths which had effected such a change in Melcomb's heart.

"It was not very long after this blessed alteration, that William began to remember his Harriet; but *it was with much difficulty* he brought himself to

the resolution of writing to her; he felt he did not deserve the least consideration on her part; that he had virtually released her from her engagement; and that it was possible she might be already the possession of another; the thought was exquisitely painful; yet he felt, that under any circumstances, his conduct required humiliation and apology; and that there might be a faint hope, if she was yet disengaged, her Christian feelings might lead her to a reconciliation with one whose character had undergone such a revolution since they parted. He resolved, in fine, to venture a letter, containing much of the information I have detailed, and ending with an entreaty that she would forgive, and again receive him into the favour he had forfeited.

“My aunt Harriet is not a being of stern mould; her affections had never once varied towards this wayward but interesting young man; and now that he appeared to have become everything her fondest hopes or wishes could have anticipated, she did not hesitate a moment in her answer. It was full of soothing kindness and gentle affection, exalted by Christian piety; and congratulation on the better foundation they now enjoyed for future domestic happiness, than that on which they had built in an earlier period of intimacy. Her letter contained no reproach, a weapon which females seldom use to their own advantage.

“The reply was full of gratitude and pure Christian affection; he told her he had obtained leave of absence, having now been three years in India; and that in the course of a few months he expected to

see her in England. How happy did this intelligence make my dear aunt. Even now I can call to mind her lively beaming countenance, her artless joy of heart, diffusing cheerfulness over our whole domestic circle; the pleasure of my father and mother; and the many little preparations which took place for Captain Melcomb's reception, including those for the event which was expected to take place shortly after his arrival. I remember my aunt taking me one evening to sit beside her, and asking me fondly, did I remember William, and did I love him still; and did I recollect his kindness to me in mending my cars and horses when they were broken, and teaching me how to work in my garden, and how to build a bridge over the brook; and how he used to draw pictures for me of a wet day, when I could not go out; and cut my pencils, and amuse me when every body else was tired? Yes, I told her; all this I remembered well. 'And he is coming here again, Theophilus,' said she, 'and, perhaps, he will be your uncle then, and he will be kinder to you than ever, and talk to you about better things than ever he did; for he loves God, Theophilus, more than he did at that time, and he will talk to you about Him, and will read with you in the Bible, and tell you many pretty stories of the wonders that God's hands have done in India. Will you not love him dearly, Theophilus?' 'Oh yes, aunt,' said I, 'indeed I will.'

"In the meantime my mother and aunt received a pressing invitation from the family of a relative in

Cornwall to pay them a visit. It had often been declined on former occasions; and as it was not probable my aunt would be able to avail herself of it at any future period, it was resolved that they should go now, William Melcomb's arrival not being expected for two months. My father remained behind, as he could not leave his parish, and my mother took me with her. The place we went to was beautifully situated, on a retired romantic coast, within view of a bold rocky outline stretching far into the sea, making navigation dangerous in dark or stormy weather. Our relative said, that the only circumstance which abated the pleasure she enjoyed from her residence, was the frequent occurrence of accidents to ships, sometimes of a most fatal kind. When we had been here about a fortnight, the night being rather dark, and the wind tempestuous, we were alarmed, about twelve o'clock, by a signal of distress. On looking out we could plainly perceive lights, which from the direction in which they appeared, were supposed to belong to a ship which had struck upon the rocks. Mr. Owen, husband of the friend in whose house we were staying, immediately ordered a boat of his own to be prepared for going out to save the lives of those on board; for he said he never knew a vessel to strike on those rocks which did not go to pieces in a very short time. At first the men refused to go; the night was excessively dark, and the surf so high, that they said it was as much as their lives were worth to venture. Mr. Owen, however, offered them high rewards, and would have accompanied

them himself, to set an example, if the entreaties of his wife had not dissuaded him. The boat set out, and reached the wreck, a fine merchant vessel, just as her stern had parted, and the passengers and crew were trying to save themselves on floating beams and pieces of wood; several were struggling in the waters; the boat received as many as it could contain, and rowed to shore, promising to return as quickly as possible. But it was not easy to contend with the surf and billows on such a night as this. With great difficulty the boatmen made the shore, and put off again to the wreck. But, alas, most of those whom they had before heard struggling to preserve life, in conflict with the waves, were now silent and sunk. One voice alone called for help; it was a young man, supporting the body of another, who seemed quite lifeless. 'Come in,' said the boatmen, 'but drop your companion, for there is no use in encumbering the boat with the dead.' 'No, never, never,' said the young man; 'living or dying I will not be parted from my friend; let me in, or leave me, just as you please.' The boatmen thought his manner frantic, but they lifted him, almost in an exhausted state, into their boat, and were surprised to see him wrap the body of his companion close to his own, in the most agonizing embrace. In the mean time the poor wearied and half-drowned individuals, who had arrived in the first cargo, had been carefully attended to by Mrs. Owen, my aunt, and mother; dry clothes, and warm beds provided, and every

comfort that could alleviate their sufferings. They were chiefly sailors, except a little boy, who looked like a gentleman's son; he and two others, they said, were the only passengers; and that the vessel was on its way homeward from India, with a cargo of rice and sugar. My aunt looked at my mother when the word India was pronounced. 'Thank God,' said she, 'William Melcomb has taken his passage in an Indiaman, the 'Harley Castle,' and he cannot yet be past the Cape of Good Hope.' 'Did you say Melcomb, ma'am?' said one of the sailors. 'Captain Melcomb sailed with us; he would not wait for the 'Harley Castle,' which was to set out three weeks later.' My aunt staggered back a few paces, and grew so sick that Mrs. Owen had to support her, while my mother faintly inquired whether Captain Melcomb had remained on the wreck? 'God only knows, ma'am,' returned the sailor; 'we all had to take care of ourselves. It was so dark we could scarcely distinguish anybody, but I think he had that little fellow in his arms, and put him into the boat; and if we had not been in such a hurry to be off, and frightened, lest too many should crowd in and sink us all, we might have had him into it also.' Here the little boy began to weep bitterly. 'Oh, my Mr. Melcomb, where are you—my friend—my brother—why did you save me, and lose your own precious life, my own, own kind Melcomb!' My aunt could not stand this scene; with difficulty she was now restrained from rushing to the shore, and there awaiting the

next arrival of the boat, containing either the object of her hopes or the dreadful confirmation of her fears. The boat approached: two passengers were taken out—one borne in the arms—they were conveyed in silence to Mr. Owen's lodge, and the first light of the torch, which shone upon the lifeless body, revealed the fair forehead and lovely, though pallid countenance of William Melcomb.

“I never shall forget the moment in which the fact of his identity flashed across me. Child as I was, I had a keen perception of the interest that was involved in his fate, and though three years had passed away since I had seen him, the recollection of his kindness and amiability was not forgotten. I crept up to the side of the little boy who seemed a partner in my tribulation, and we wept together for hours. The young gentleman, who had linked his fate so closely with that of Melcomb, was a Lieutenant Jefferson, the young officer who had been so much impressed by the manly profession of religion which the latter had made, and the exemplary conduct with which he adorned it. He was returning to his friends in England, having obtained leave of absence for the recovery of his health, and attachment to Melcomb, had led him to choose the same vessel for his voyage.

“The little boy was son to another officer, and was sending to England for his education; he had been entrusted to the charge of Melcomb; and if I was competent to judge at such a tender age, few persons ever undertook such a charge who executed it with

more fidelity. The little boy wept at intervals, during most of the night; he sat on the side of the bed where his friend's remains were laid, and often laid down his head embracing the dead in an agony of grief. I felt the deepest sympathy with him, and at times engaged him in conversation; he had but one theme, the praises of his lamented friend, whose kindness seemed to have made a deep impression upon him: he told me some sweet stories of that young man's anxiety to improve his mind during the voyage; of the pains he took to instruct him every day, not only in matters belonging to human learning, but in those relating to his immortal soul: how he used to talk to him of the loving Saviour who had given his life for sinners, and had commanded little children to be brought to him to bless them; and he told me also of a poor sailor who was very sick of a desperate disease, and had been put in a remote part of the ship to prevent him from infecting others, and how Captain Melcomb used to go down and read to him every day, and send him little delicacies from his own mess, and that his kindness had made the poor sailor not only live comfortable in sickness, but in death happy. He also said that when the ship struck, Captain Melcomb and Mr. Jefferson seemed less frightened than any other persons on board; they were quite calm, and ready to do anything, while every one else seemed nearly distracted. We two little boys were left much to ourselves during the night. Mr. Jefferson seemed too much absorbed in grief to

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attend to us, and the others were busy in taking care of themselves."

"But mean time where was Miss Percy?"

"Oh, I forgot to tell you she had become quite insensible, and was immediately conveyed to bed; a violent fever came on towards morning, and for several days she was in a delirious state, and knew nothing of what was passing around her. In the mean time poor Captain Melcomb's remains were conveyed to the tomb, attended by his friend Jefferson and Mr. Owen, the little lad I have mentioned, and myself, as chief mourners. A few papers were found on his person, some relating to his temporal affairs, but one seemed to be a kind of diary of his religious feelings for several months past; this was carefully preserved for the sake of my aunt, in the event of her recovery. A large chest was also washed on shore, marked with his address; it was opened by Mr. Owen, and the goods within found to have been considerably spoiled by the sea-water; it was full of presents for our family, as we perceived by the labels on the different parcels, and the invoice found among his papers. There were several fine India shawls for my mother and aunt; specimens of pierced ivory for my father, and some curious Sanscrit manuscripts; a box of shells and other natural curiosities for me, and a curious chain of black hair set in gold and wrapped in paper, containing this inscription: '*For my beloved Harriet—a chain made from the hair of one of the first Indian devotees of the Bramin*

caste, converted to Christianity, knowing she will share the joy of angels over the sinner that repenteth.'

"After the funeral, Mr. Owen restored all these things to the chest, and took charge also of another which drifted ashore amongst the many articles that floated out of the wreck, and which evidently belonged to poor Captain Melcomb, as it contained numerous books having his name inscribed. But after some time, when the whole had been delivered up to his nearest relative, who came to Cornwall to enquire about the shipwreck, and take possession of any effects which might remain, the contents of the first chest, (which I have enumerated,) were presented in the kindest manner to the individuals for whom they had been intended.


"To return to Miss Percy—her fever was long and perilous—my mother sat up with her for many nights, but she said it was sweet and astonishing to hear the nature of her ravings; they were often wild and incoherent, it is true, but never rebellious. Sometimes she appeared to be conversing with the disembodied spirit of her friend, to fancy herself an inhabitant of the same pure world, and to be ranging with him through the fields of light and love. Sometimes she seemed to be addressing his body, as if contemplating it from a higher state of existence, just thrown up by the waves; looking down with compassion upon mortal agony, and sympathizing with the survivors in the lofty strain of one who no longer partook of the same infirmities. At one time my mother heard her say, ~~with~~ an animated eye and burning cheek,

‘What speaks the pestilence, that with fiery step and poisoned breath stalks through the devoted city and blights the fairest and the best? *Set your affections upon things above.* What saith the unruly winds that sweep with desolating violence the earth, turning from its bosom the longest cherished of its children, and levelling to the dust the proudest of its edifices? *Set your affections upon things above.* And what saith the rude black billow that heaves its rugged bosom from the deep, and rolling onward grasps in its cold embrace the *loveliest, dearest, brightest, fondest?* *Set your affections upon things above.*’ Again, at another time she would clasp her hands together and look upward saying, ‘Thou hast conquered—Lord Jesus, thou hast conquered—thou wouldst not dwell in a divided heart, and I am thine *for ever*—thine body, soul, and spirit—thine memory, mind, and will—thine for time and for eternity! Never, never more to part!’ As the fever abated, her delirium went off, and she became more silent, but not less heavenly-minded. My mother never alluded to the cause of her illness, and her recovery went on slowly and naturally, as if it had arisen from no unusual cause. Strange to say, she was herself the first to make enquiries about it, and with perfect calmness she bore the recital of most of the particulars I have told you. Hearing the journal spoken of, she requested to see it, and when it was put into her hands, for the first time after the event, she burst into tears; but soon she wiped them away, and smiled again. ‘Grieve not for me, my beloved

er,' said she, seeing my mother weeping; 'the Lord hath done it; but He hath, in mercy, left no bitterness in this separation: for the soul of my own precious—yes, I will acknowledge it—my *unspeakably dear* friend, is safe for ever. I am left in no doubt on this subject, and therefore I must rejoice. At a little while, and I shall be as he is, an inhabitant of heaven; an inheritor of glory; admitted into the company of the King of kings; a companion of Lord Jesus. Oh! my sister, can I be so selfish to wish he should exchange such companionship, though but for a while, for that of poor Harriet!'

"All this appears to me quite wonderful," said Henry: "perfectly supernatural. Do you think her feelings are naturally deep or sensitive?"

"Particularly so," answered Leighton; "but her mind was very far from being equal in energy to her hand; and the same powerful, and, as you justly say, supernatural influence, which supported the one, here tended to weaken and oppress the other. Though she showed such lovely resignation to the Divine will, and seemed to grow more spiritual and more heavenly-minded than ever under this deep strengthening of her Father's hand, yet her constitution was evidently shattered; and the fever retreating, left her almost wholly without the use of her limbs. Her father and mother felt deeply interested in her restoration, and prevailed on her first to go to Bath, and afterwards to Brighton, to try the effect of warm springs and vapour baths. Through the blessing of God, and after a long period of fear and hope, these



means were rendered available, and my dear aunt was restored to us; the pale delicate creature you see she is, and which she has remained ever since: but the life of our domestic circle, the joy and comfort of her friends, and the pattern of useful and benevolent exertion to the whole parish.

“Now, Henry, do you think Philip was right in bemoaning her and calling her blighted?”

“Why, I am not sure; *in a sense* I think she *is* blighted; for all the brightest prospects of her early youth were destroyed.”

“But if they had been fulfilled, do you think she would have been *much* more *happy*, or *much* more useful than she is?”

Henry smiled. “Indeed I can hardly conceive how she could be either; for I do not know any one, however favourably circumstanced, who looks so cheerful, or seems always more busily employed.”

“Then it appears she is fulfilling the great end of life; she is living with eternity in view; glorifying God by her good works; enjoying happiness in herself, and being a means of diffusing it to others. Can any state in life do more for us than this? and is it not *fancy*, *enthusiasm*, I may say *madness*, for us to suppose that we could apportion a better lot, and one more suitable for present enjoyment and future good, than the one appointed for us by Divine Providence?”

“But,” replied Henry, “I think we always like our own choice best, and it is very hard to submit to circumstances so very contrary to our wishes. Be-

es, if a person could be so very wise, and good, and devoted, as Miss Percy, under such a dreadful trial and privation as hers, I cannot but think how well qualified such a mind would have been to rule a family, guide a large establishment, and be a comfort and blessing to her husband and all his connections."

"Ah! dear Henry," said Leighton, "how know you, if her mind would have flourished and grown as rich under circumstances like those, as it has done under affliction and mortification? She herself acknowledged that her heart had already been *divided* in its allegiance; and perhaps if she had been suffered to complete her projected union, it might have become envenomed altogether. Depend upon it, the very condition in which the Lord is pleased to place us, is the most favourable for our growth in grace; and whatever joys he takes from us, are those which would be dangerous to our souls' welfare. The time is coming, dear Henry, when the Lord will justify his promises to men, and prove, to our full satisfaction, that there is ALL WISDOM and ALL LOVE; but in the intermediate space, let our minds rest in the full persuasion of it; let us, as far as we can, *believe* He does all things well; and where we cannot *see* it, let it be the lightful office of faith to trust Him with unlimited confidence."

"I wish I could do so," said Henry, with a sigh; but tell me, what became of the little boy and lieutenant Jefferson, who accompanied poor Captain

Melcomb from India? Where did they go after the funeral?"

"I believe they went to London, as I heard that Jefferson had undertaken to bring the little fellow to his friends; but I never saw or heard any thing about them since the day after William Melcomb was buried."

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CHAPTER VI.

Our heavenly guide
 With us shall abide,
 His comfort impart,
 And set up his kingdom of love in the heart.
 The heart that believes
 His kingdom receives,
 His pow'r and his peace,
 His life and his joy's everlasting increase.

C. WESLEY.

the recital which Henry had received from his
 and, respecting Miss Percy, greatly increased his
 respect and interest in her; and he felt more than
 : desirous to observe her character and' occu-
 ons. But there was something so unostentatious
 he former, and so quiet and systematic in the
 er, that he did not find it so easy to trace her
 s as he had expected. Though Mr. Leighton
 proposed in the outset, that Henry should
 t throughout the parish, and see every plan that
 been arranged in complete operation, (and this he
 done at the particular request of Theophilus,
 was anxious that Henry should see every thing

that might profit him, both for his own sake and that of the future work in which he might be engaged,) yet, as the individuals of the family knew their duties were simple and common, and though perhaps neglected by others, nothing more than natural to do, where there is love to God and man in the heart, they continued just to go on as heretofore, without extra conversation on such subjects, or needless display, and therefore Henry was uninvited to accompany their walks of mercy, and saw little of what was going on. Theophilus, however, was far from losing sight of his object, and meant to introduce his friend, by slow degrees, into such habits of intimacy with the family, as would make them feel his presence no intrusion, even in their most quiet and retired engagements; and thus enable him to see the Christian character in its internal as well as external developments.

Henry had been nearly a fortnight at Lilybrook when an evening arrived, occurring twice in the month, in which Mr. Leighton held a kind of meeting, for the more serious members of his parish, in which they considered some portion of the word of God, prayed for the Divine help in assisting them to understand it, and conversed together, or made inquiries of Mr. Leighton as to the meaning of such portion. They had also a subject proposed on every occasion, generally arising out of the particular part of Scripture they were reading: this subject they were to consider during the interval of the meeting, and find in what manner it

was proved or illustrated by Scripture. The subject was always of a practical nature, and had two important uses ; first, it accustomed the people who assembled, to search the Scriptures, and made them familiar with their contents ; and secondly, it led them to look upon this book as their guide in all matters of doubt and perplexity, and to try their principles by its unerring standard. Mr. Leighton always presided at this meeting ; Mrs. Leighton, Miss Percy, and the elder branches of the family also attended. The remainder of the party consisted of six or eight persons, in the rank of farmers or yeomen, who by their serious attention at church, and consistent conduct, had given their minister reason to hope that they were truly in earnest about the concerns of their souls. On the evening I have mentioned, the meeting commenced with a hymn, in which every one present tried to join, and then Mr. Leighton offered up a fervent prayer, that there might be a divine blessing sent down upon all who were assembled to search the word of God, and learn his will ; that the Holy Spirit might aid them to read and understand the Scriptures aright, giving them spiritual eyes to see into the truth, and devoted hearts, ready humbly to receive and obey it when known ; that they might all have an humble, teachable, and childlike spirit, united in Christian love, anxious to edify one another, and ready to sit for instruction at each other's feet ; and that, finally, their meetings here below might all tend to raise their affections to a better world, quicken their faith,

and brighten their hopes, and enable them so to pass through things temporal, as to gain at length the things eternal, through the merits and all-prevailing intercession of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The subject conversed on this evening, had arisen from some questions that had been considered on the last occasion, in connection with the portion of Scripture then read, viz. the 2d verse of 1st chapter 2 Corinthians, *Grace be to you, and peace from God our Father*. An inquiry was made, how this peace, when once in the possession of a believer, was to be kept alive and sensibly retained, amidst the storms and billows of this unruly world. Mr. Leighton had then proposed, that this should be the subject in reference to which they should search the Scripture, during the following fortnight; and now, after he had read for a little while with his party, and conversed as usual, the question was brought forward.

"Well, friends," said Mr. Leighton, "we have a sweet subject to talk about this evening, and I hope we have all been thinking of it during our separation—How we are to *retain* and enjoy that peace which is the gift of God? Now this peace is a principle of enjoyment altogether distinct from outward *ease, prosperity, health, friends*, or any other circumstances whatever, for the Lord Jesus himself says, *In the world ye shall have tribulation, but in me ye shall have peace*. John, xvi. 33. Now, farmer Johnson, perhaps you can tell us from whence this peace arises."

“ I think, Sir, it must surely be from reconciliation of the mind to God : the natural enmity being taken away, and holy love substituted in its place—for I read here in Ephes. ii. 13, 14, *But now in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ, for he is our PEACE.*

Mr. Leighton resumed. “ This great blessing, then, is to remain *ours* under every circumstance, because it is from the Lord Jesus we derive it, and he is unchangeable, the same yesterday, today, and for ever ; we are, therefore, to feel its power under sorrow and privation, in sickness, in loss of friends, in loss of reputation, in weariness and watchings, in laborious duties and in lawful occupations.—What then, do you think we must do first, John Williams ?”

“ I would say, Sir, we must abide in Christ, as St. John says, fifteenth chapter, fourth verse, because peace is a fruit of the Spirit, and can neither be produced nor retained but by union with him.”

“ Very well, my friend, no better direction than this : now, Mary Williams, what does your Bible further advise ?”

“ I think, Sir,” said Mary, with an air of modest deference, “ we must read the Scriptures much, and delight in them, for they say, *Great peace have they which love thy law.* Psalm cxix. 165.”

Mr. Leighton now looked at Miss Percy, who sat next in turn. “ It would appear, brother,” said she, “ that it is needful to cultivate *unwavering* faith, in

order to retain the true composure of a Christian mind; for after our Lord had given his disciples peace, he adds the admonition : *Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.* John, xiv. 27. Again, I read in Psalm cxii. 7, the same means referred to, *He shall not be afraid of evil tidings; his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord.* It seems to me that it was in the perfect exercise of this principle our Lord Jesus slept amidst the storm, and that the disciples would probably have been as calm, had their minds been like that of their Master; for when they awoke Him. He said to them, rebukingly—*Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith.*

“ I think, father,” said Theophilus, who sat beside his aunt, “ that in connection with what was last observed, in order both to cultivate unwavering faith, and retain permanent peace of mind, we should be most watchful over our thoughts, lest anxieties should creep in unawares, and occupy the temple that ought wholly to be the Lord’s. The promise and precept to this end are contained here in Isaiah xxvi. 3. *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee.* The beginnings of spiritual declension and disturbance are generally from within, owing to our unguardedness in entertaining other thoughts besides those of a holy and profitable nature.”

“ I would inquire, with great deference, Sir,” said a young man, who sat at the other side of Theophilus, “ how we are to avoid having many thoughts that seem to have little connection with religion in any

way? We, who are engaged in earning our daily bread, have many subjects of interest and anxiety that perhaps our superiors know nothing about. We must think of our fields and our crops; of the seasons, and the weather, and the markets; of our families, how we are to rear our children, and put them forward in the world; and I cannot think it is sinful to be properly thoughtful and careful about these matters."

Mr. Leighton replied, "We do not mean, my friend, to teach that men are to be neglectful or inattentive to the duties of their situation; so far from it, that we consider the Word of God inculcates and provides for all due regard to the business of our lawful occupations, and the maintenance of our families; indeed, it seems throughout, to address itself to those who are so circumstanced. But can it be said of men in general, even of those who profess a knowledge of the Gospel, that they give up no more time and thought to their temporal concerns, than is absolutely necessary, and that the remainder is wholly and unreservedly dedicated to God?"

"Indeed, Sir, I fear not. I know my own conscience is not clear upon that point; but still I thought, that it would not be wrong to think a great deal about my business, and I have got such a habit of it, that it is in my mind all day. When I rise in the morning, the first thing occurs to me is to look out and see what the weather promises, and what I have to do in my fields or garden; and then, if it is unfavourable, I feel fretted, and have to consider what

is to be done in-doors; and sometimes I remember a piece of work that will be spoiled by lying over and not being finished at once, and this vexes me and I can't help being annoyed about it."

"But does this feeling of annoyance lessen the evil, my friend?"

"No, indeed, Sir—quite otherwise; but what to be done? I cannot put these concerns off my mind, and so the consequence is, I feel very little hope of enjoying peace during my sojourn in this world."

"That would be sad, indeed," said Mr. Leighton, "but can we not find some remedy for these distressing cares and anxieties, in the blessed volume now before us. Surely there is no disease of the mind, no unpropitious circumstance in which we can be placed, which the God of Love has not foreseen and provided for. Now what do we read in Philippians iv. 6, 7? *Be careful for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving make your requests known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*"

"Sir, I don't think I ever paid attention to that passage before. If the Lord enables me to do this, I am sure I shall be happier."

"You will indeed, Robert, and then the Lord will manifest himself to your soul, and make your way plain, and give you comfort, such as the world cannot give nor take away.

"Thou on the Lord rely,
 So safe shalt thou go on ;
 Fix on *His work* thy steadfast eye,
 So shall thy work be done.
 No profit canst thou gain
 By self-consuming care.
 To Him commend thy cause—His ear
 Attends the softest prayer."

s. Leighton's turn to speak had now arrived :
 "I have been studying," said she, "the characters of
 Mary and Mary, in the 10th chapter of St. Luke,
 would conclude from thence, that to be too much
 occupied with care about temporal matters, is sure
 to disturb our peace, and unfit us for attention to
 teaching. It caused Martha to fret and com-
 plain to her sister, as well as to neglect the blessed
 communion she had of sitting at the Master's feet.
 Her occupations should, therefore, not be too
 numerous, nor of a distracting nature, nor allowed to
 interfere with the time that ought to be exclusively
 for the Lord's."

s. Leighton asked, "Would you infer, my dear
 that *any* of our time is *not* to be the Lord's?"
 s. smiled. "No; I think I said *exclusively*."
 s. agreed entirely with you, my dear, that it is
 the believer's privilege to be serving his Master in
 what he says and does; he *LIVES in the spirit*, and
 is *in the spirit*; he looks unto Jesus in all things,
 carries a sense of his presence, when superin-
 tending his farm, or purchasing his merchandize, or
 rearing his children; but the more completely he

walks with God throughout these duties, the more perfectly does he enjoy the hour of retirement, which withdraws him from all other occupation, and leaves him free to give all the powers of his mind to the object of his supreme delight. I think our favourite though quaint poet, Herbert, has some lines expressive of this devotedness of spirit in those situations which we would consider little calculated to forward Christian advancement:

Teach me, my God and King,
In all things *Thee* to see;
And what I do in any thing,
To do it as for *Thee*.

A servant with this clause
Makes drudgery divine:
Who sweeps a room, as for thy laws,
Makes that and th' action fine.

This is the famous stone
That turneth all to gold;
For that which God doth touch and own,
Cannot for less be told."

Philip now took up the subject, and remarked, that there can not be peace, unless there be a cultivation of spiritual mindedness. He quoted Rom. viii. 6: *To be spiritually minded is life and peace.*

The person seated next to Philip, said, it was necessary for those who wished to enjoy peace to keep a CLEAR CONSCIENCE; and read, in corroboration, from Psalm, lxxxv. 8, *He will speak peace unto his people and to his saints; but let them not turn again to folly.* In the commission of sin there can be n

peace. Isa. xlviii. 18 and 22: *O that thou hadstarken-
ed to my commandments, then had thy peace
been as a river. There is no peace, saith the Lord,
unto the wicked.**

The next observation was made by Henry Villeroi, who said, that the blessing might be promoted by prayer for its abundance and increase, upon ourselves and others; and he read passages from the introductory chapters of several epistles, showing how much this was the practice of the Apostles.

Some other remarks being made, Mr. Leighton then asked his younger friends who were present, if they could recollect any instances of self-possession related in Scripture, regarding those who were in imminent danger of death, but who proved, by their calmness, the efficacy of that peace of God, which rules in the heart and inspires true courage and magnanimity.

The children mentioned, with readiness, Daniel's conduct in the lion's den; the three young Jews in Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace; Paul and Silas singing praises in a prison; the Lord Jesus sleeping in the storm.

"Now, my dear friends," said Mr. Leighton, "we have found a great many profitable passages of Scripture on this theme, but there is one important point of view in which we have not yet regarded it; and, as your affectionate pastor, my dearly beloved, I feel it necessary now to draw your attention to it. A

* Further on this subject, Deut. xxix. 19, 20.

true coin is seldom without its counterfeit, and Satan has been busy, ever since the world began, in trying to pass his base metal upon the souls of men, in place of the pure currency of the Gospel. Now, there is no thing more common than counterfeits of divine peace and nothing more dangerous for our souls than to mistake in this matter. The word of God itself warns us of this state of false security. There is the peace of the DEAD, UNAWAKENED HEART, which knows not its own danger, pointed out in Luke, xi. 21, *When the strong man armed keepeth his palace his goods are in peace.* And again, in chapter xii. 16, &c. where our Lord relates the parable of the rich man. There is the peace of STOICISM, or a state of hardness and impenetrability, such as Pharaoh exhibited under the judgments sent upon Egypt. There is the peace of INDIFFERENCE. Isaiah, xxxii. 9, &c. *Rise up ye women THAT ARE AT EASE: hear my voice, ye CARELESS daughters, &c.* The peace of FALSE PROFESSION, which rests in outward observances, noted by Jeremiah, vi. 14: *They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying peace, peace, where there was no peace.* And the peace of SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS, Jer. xi. 35: *Yet thou sayest, because I am innocent, surely his anger shall turn from me: behold I will plead with thee, because (thou sayest) I have not sinned.* Let us therefore examine ourselves closely by the characteristics mentioned in Scripture, and which we have now searched out and read to one another, whether we have any of those graces of the Spirit which are linked with heavenly peace of mind—

that peace which passeth all understanding, which the world has not in her gift to bestow, but which it is also out of her power to take away. Let us also examine if we are resting in false composure, for this is a more dangerous state than even that of turmoil and restlessness, seeing that it substitutes a falsehood for a reality, and imposes upon the soul a pernicious feeling of security. Let us not stop short, my beloved friends, of resting upon Jesus, the sure foundation of Christian hope. Make *Him* your object, the anchor of your soul's repose, and then, though storms may blow around you, and the waves of sorrow rise high, they will not overwhelm, for He will be near you, and with you for ever, and bring you safely to the harbour of eternal blessedness."

The hour for separating now drawing nigh, Mr. Leighton proposed that they should all join in singing the twenty-third Psalm, a sweet and appropriate picture of the calm enjoyment of a faithful believer's soul, while travelling onward through this world's wilderness to his happy home. Theophilus Leighton was then requested by his father to offer up a prayer, after which the meeting was concluded, and the strangers took their leave.

CHAPTER VII.

Saviour, confirm my heart's desire,
 To work, and speak, and think for thee ;
 Still let me guard the holy fire,
 And still stir up thy gift in me.

C. WESLEY.

THE next morning, Elizabeth not being well, Miss Percy was asked at breakfast who was to be her companion through the day, as this was the one in which she usually visited among the cottages, every week. Several voices said, "Oh, let *me*, Aunt Harriet," or "let *me*." Amongst others, Henry said, modestly but earnestly, "If you will permit me, Miss Percy, I will take it as a favor to be allowed to accompany you." Miss Percy hesitated. "Why, my young friend," said she, "I am afraid you would be rather tired of my company and occupations before the labor of the day is concluded." "I hope not," said Henry, "though I ought not to feel self-confident (looking at Theophilus); for there are those present who have seen me flag before now, in the Lord's service. I can only say, it is my earnest wish to be faithful and useful; and perhaps it would

Help to strengthen and encourage me, if I was permitted to witness your mode of proceeding. I have much to learn, dear Miss Percy. Will you refuse *your* aid towards helping a young and ignorant disciple in his efforts to follow the right path?"

Miss Percy felt the appeal, but her Christian humility made her doubt whether she, as an individual, was calculated to lead forward a young person in Henry's state of mind. Theophilus knew what was passing in her mind, and, fearful lest she should decidedly refuse Henry's request, he joined immediately his own entreaties to the same effect, and succeeded.

It was accordingly agreed, that Henry should be Miss Percy's companion for this day through the parish, and assist her wherever she required it; and that Jessie Leighton, the second sister of Theophilus, should accompany them with a little basket, containing some small books and tracts, a little preserved fruit for a person who was sick, and a needle-book, thread, thimble, and scissors, to have at hand in case any needle-work might be necessary.


The first house they stopped at, belonged to farmer Williams, who, with his wife, had been present at the reading and prayer-meeting held the previous evening at the Vicarage. They found Mary Williams at home, and in the kitchen, superintending her domestic affairs. The fire had gone out, and the maid had just succeeded in kindling a faint spark by means of a match and some tinder, which she was now gently encouraging, by breathing upon it, and fanning it

with her apron. Mrs. Williams, however, not thinking these exertions active enough, had seized the kitchen bellows, and, by a few rapid and powerful movements, had sent so strong a blast upon the glimmering spark as utterly to extinguish it. Just at this juncture, the party from the Rectory arrived, and Mrs. Williams, rising from her low seat opposite the grate, where she had been stationed, came forward to receive them, and, wiping her heated forehead, explained what she had been about. Miss Percy now told the object of her visit, which was to see Mrs. Williams's eldest daughter, who had been much confined at home by indisposition, and to whom she had promised to lend a book. "I wish particularly to know how Ellen is going on," said Miss Percy; "for I have remarked her serious behaviour at church, and her attention in school, and hope she is turning her thoughts to the concerns of her soul."

Mrs. Williams immediately commenced an eulogium on the character of her daughter, which, there was reason to believe, was not exaggerated. She praised her for her dutiful conduct to her parents, her gentleness and love to her brothers and sisters, her consideration for the servants; also her love for the word of God and His worship, her desire for instruction, and her patience under illness. "And ma'am," added Mrs. Williams, "her father and I are determined that nothing shall be wanting on our part to make her a true Christian; for we know this is our only happiness and safety, as well as that of our children. So we watch her well every day, and if

we find her remiss in anything, we immediately reprove her for it. We ask her always at breakfast how long she has been up, and how much time she has spent in reading and prayer; and if she has been neglectful, we speak to her very gravely: then, even if she is sick, we make her go to the school almost always, and twice on Sunday to church; not that she is at all unwilling, but we feel it our duty not to leave her a choice that may be wrong. Then we always bring her to any meeting or religious exercise that may be at a neighbour's, or even in the next town, if we have time to go so far; and we make her try and remember all she can, and tell it to her brothers and sisters when she comes home; and if she remembers very little, we are sure to admonish her severely upon the hardness and coldness of her heart. Also, we do not encourage her in high spirits, for fear she should fall into levity, or foolish speaking and jesting; so that I am sure we do all in our power to improve and nurture the seed of grace that, we trust, is in her heart, besides praying earnestly for her; for we know it is the Lord alone can give the increase. And oh, ma'am, if you could know how a mother's heart feels over the child that seems to be turning to God, how inexpressibly precious her soul is to us, and how anxiously and earnestly we commit her in prayer to Him, that He may bless and preserve and make her His own for time and eternity." Here the poor woman paused, and looked upward, her eyes full of tears, and her cheek glowing with the ardor of maternal emotion.

Her auditors were not unsympathizing, but Miss Percy replied, " You are quite right, my dear Mrs. Williams, to feel this anxiety about your child's soul; and I am sure your good pastor would approve of the method you have taken, of bringing her case to the Lord, and praying for His divine blessing upon her, and for the increase of His grace. But allow me to say, with the true interest and affection of a Christian friend, that I fear your other plans are not judicious. There is such a thing as *over doing*, and thus defeating our object—for illustration, look at the bleak aspect of your kitchen grate—the spark of fire has been extinguished, by laboured efforts to bring it into a flame—left quietly to kindle, or just excited by a gentle breath now and then, it might now have given a bright and permanent heat, but you would not give it time. Now, apply the case, and take my advice; leave Ellen more to herself, do not continually seem to watch her movements, nor question her as to her private retirement. If she becomes remiss in secret prayer, and study of the Scriptures, you will soon see the loss in her temper and deportment, and then it will be time enough to enquire the cause—do not make religion burthensome to her, by forcing an extra attendance upon the means of grace, especially when she is unwell, nor by any means repress the cheerfulness of her disposition, for fear of excess, unless you actually perceive it has led her into sin; if not, you run the chance of two evils, either of making her a formalist, by forcing her to carry the *appearance* of reli-



gion beyond the action of its living principle, or of making her renounce the attempt in despair: when she finds her spiritual strength not equal to the duties imposed upon her. Babes must be led gently, my dear Mrs. Williams—they must be nurtured tenderly—they must be led by the hand, before we force them to walk; and they must be fed with milk, till they become of maturer age, and stronger powers in the exercise of Christian grace.”

Miss Percy now left a little book in charge with Mrs. Williams for her daughter, and after some further conversation, during which the mother's mind seemed to be convinced of her erroneous mode of proceeding, the party took their leave, and proceeded onward through the village. Here they perceived several idle little boys playing in a pool, formed by a swelling of the brook, during some heavy rains. Miss Percy on perceiving them, stopped at a cottage door, and calling to a woman who seemed busy within, asked her why she had not sent her children to the school that day: “Indeed ma'am,” she answered, “I tried to persuade them to go, and they would not.” “I am afraid your method of managing them is not right, or surely they would obey you.” “Indeed ma'am, I can't tell, I scold them till they leave the house, and I have told the master to beat them well, after they have been a day absent, to prevent their doing the same thing again, but they were afraid of the beating this morning, because they played truant yesterday, so I suppose that is the reason they did not mind me, and I'm sure I don't know what more I can do.”

"Pray have you any hens, Mrs. Nesbitt?" "Indeed I have, ma'am, and plenty of chickens—I have a great many, and send them to market, and they are a great help to my poor family."

"How do you bring them together, when you want to feed them?"

The woman smiled. "Indeed ma'am, it is easy enough to do that;" and she took a wooden platter from the shelf, with some crumbs of bread and meat on it, and scattering a little with her hand before the door, she used a peculiar call of encouragement, and immediately a dozen or two of fine fowls flocked about her and began to feed.

"If they did not come readily," remarked Miss Percy, "I suppose you would try to frighten them and drive them together with stones."

Mrs. Nesbitt laughed, and looked incredulously at Miss Percy, not knowing whether she spoke in jest or earnest. "Indeed, ma'am," she replied, "that would be of little use. If I frightened them much, they would go away from me altogether, and I should lose them—no body would think of rearing birds without treating them kindly, and coaxing them by feeding them plentifully, and taking care not to annoy or disturb them."

"Well Mrs. Nesbitt," replied Miss Percy, "I fear you have never tried the same method with your little boys, or your management would have succeeded better; the hens come at your call, because they know you have something they like to receive, and they are not afraid of your hurting them; but your children are expected to do what is disagreeable

to them, without the least inducement, but rather with the menace of renewed punishment. Let me see if we can prevail upon them by gentler means. Call them hither."

The mother went forward, and called Jemmy, and Johnny, and Tom, out of the pool, with rather a harsh tone of voice. Most reluctantly and slowly did they obey, and perhaps would not have done so at all, if they had not perceived the gentle conciliating countenance of Miss Percy at the cottage door, who repeated the call in the soft inviting manner, which never fails to inspire children with confidence. They rushed past their mother, and came up to her.

"My dear little boys," said she, "I am sorry to find you are so foolishly employed, when you know you ought to be at school. If you go on spending your time in idleness, you will never be wise, or good, or respectable."

"But we don't like to learn," said Johnny; "and then mother bids the master beat us; and sometimes when we are inclined to go, we are afraid."

"Well, Johnny," said Miss Percy, "I hope, when you are older, you will have sense enough to see the advantage of learning, even though it should give you a little trouble at first; but, in the mean time, suppose I should go to the master, and ask him to pass over your fault this time, and promise that you will try and be more regular in attendance in future, do you think you would go to school to-morrow?"

"Yes ma'am."

"Can you read, Johnny?"

The little boy hung down his head.

"Can Jemmy read?"

"A very little," was the reply, "and Tom does not even know his letters."

Miss Percy now took some little books out of Jessie's basket, and showed one or two that had very nice coloured pictures. "I have these to give away to good little boys who attend school, and obey their mother," said she. "Now, if you will try and be obedient, and are regularly at school every day for a month, I will give you one a-piece for a reward."

The boys looked up good humouredly in her face, and promised they would do as she wished; but Johnny said, "I have often promised mother to be a good boy, and have tried very much, but I can't keep my word. I don't know how to be good. I grow naughty the minute after I have determined to do right. So, ma'am, may be I shall not be able *now*."

Miss Percy answered, "Johnny, dear, you have found out that your heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked—a fact which is true of every body's heart, whether they know it or not. You cannot trust your own good resolutions, and you know not, therefore, what to do, or how to amend. My little boy, there is but one way for you, and for me, and for us all, to be made good. It is by coming to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to get a new heart and a new spirit; to kneel to him in prayer, beseeching him to pardon our past sins, for his dear son's sake, and give us grace and strength to overcome evil in the time to come. Nor be afraid to

y, Johnny ; nor think he will not condescend to
r and bless a little child : for when He was upon
earth, walking up and down among men, and
ng good to every one, he took notice of little
ldren, and commanded them to be brought to
t, that he might embrace them in his arms of
cy, and bless them." Seeing all the children
y attentive, Miss Percy went on to say many
l and encouraging things to them on the same
ject; their mother standing by, and apparently
sh interested. She then took a few little cakes
of her basket, and gave them to the little ones—
ot," she added, " because you deserve them; but
ause I love you, and wish to see you happy."
l then they all promised they would go to
vol in time the next morning, provided she would
on the master to intercede for their pardon.
The next visit was to an old blind woman, in a
age, who lived with her daughter, and was
wed two shillings a week by the parish towards
support. The daughter had a large family, but
very attentive to her mother, and, by Miss
cy's assistance, kept her comfortably clothed.
: poor woman's countenance brightened when
heard Miss Percy's voice. She said she had
a longing for her visit. She was bedridden, as
as blind; and the lady immediately sat down
de her with the air of one who felt much at home.
er a little conversation, she said, " Molly, I have a
ng friend here who will, perhaps, read to you in my
e today, and she offered Henry Villeroi a Bible.

1

He bowed and declined receiving it, on the plea of his qualification to speak in an instructive manner upon its contents. "But," said Miss Percy, smiling, "I know you intend to be a missionary abroad, and therefore must surely have studied this holy book already with sufficient interest, to be able to speak upon its simple truths without embarrassment. It requires no skill; we speak only of that which fills our thoughts and our affections; we study no expressions; and therefore I should hope, my young friend, you will not feel reluctant to assist me." Henry, however, with heightened colour, persisted in his refusal, and Miss Percy entreated no more; but she turned to the blind woman's daughter and asked her if there was any little work she could give to Jessie to do while the reading was going on. "I see," said she, "you are ironing your mother's cap for Sunday; but the border is ripped, and it wants new strings, and that handkerchief has been torn by a pin on the line. Here, Jessie, take your needle and thread, and mend these little articles. I think she wants new caps."

"Oh, aunt," said Jessie, "let me make one; Jane made the last for her."

"Very well," replied the aunt, "I think I may indulge you with this pleasure. Now let all be quiet while I read a little from the word of God."

Miss Percy now opened the First Epistle General of St. Peter, and offering up a short prayer for divine assistance, to understand and learn from the sacred book, she read the two first chapters, making an ob-

servation now and then, or pausing to give the opportunity of speaking to her auditors. The blind woman seemed to enjoy the reading much, and often made a remark which showed how deeply she had felt the power of the truth upon her heart. Her daughter remained quiet and attentive, completing the heel of a stocking which her mother had been knitting, but which she could not carry on through that complicated part. The rest of the family were abroad; the husband and his eldest son at labour, and the children at school; all of them being industrious and time-saving in their habits. But Miss Percy's visits had been the means of introducing religious motives to elevate, and principles to strengthen those habits. When first she knew them, they were already active, sober, and well-conducted; and a common observer would have said they needed nothing as an improvement; but those who had spiritual discernment could detect a material deficiency. They were acted upon by low earthly considerations only, self-interest being the main-spring; consequently their domestic comfort depended altogether upon the success of their worldly efforts; and whenever disappointment or unexpected misfortune came, it was sure to be accompanied with the spirit of discontent, the display of vexatious tempers, and the querulous murmurs against Providence of unsubdued and unconverted hearts. Nothing was then heard so frequently in the cottage, as complaints of the times and of their personal hardships. The blind woman, in particular, had been very fretful

under her privation. She felt herself a burden to her family, and her proud spirit rebelled. But the Lord had taught her a new lesson through the instrumentality of His blessed Word, and the instruction of her Christian friend. She had learned, not only to submit to the cross, but to rejoice under it. She had received such lowly views of herself and her own unworthiness, that now, far from thinking herself hard dealt with, all her mercies seemed undeserved, and too much for such a sinner. Instead of complaining, her mouth was now filled with praises. She felt her lot was ease and affluence compared to that of the Son of man, who had not where to lay his head; and she therefore bowed her head meekly under the dispensation of His providence, knowing and feeling assured, that He had ordered all things well. Her daughter and her son-in-law had also been gradually led to the same blessed spirit of submission—a spirit which cannot be separated from LOVE, and which therefore, dwells only in those hearts that have been reconciled to the Father, through the atonement of the Lord Jesus, and have thus been enabled to feel the loving kindness of His hand, and to rejoice in the fulfilment of His will.

When the visit was ended, Miss Percy rose, and closed her little book, promising to call again in a few days. Jessie having finished her task, folded up her needle-case, and the party left the cottage, accompanied by the sincere thanks and blessing of the good old woman and her daughter.

The next place to be visited was the infirmary, a

part of the parish poor-house, which had been appropriated exclusively to the sick. It had a male and female ward, and at present there were only four sick persons occupants, one man and three females. When Miss Percy arrived here, she requested Henry to visit the poor sick man. "He is an Irishman, and a stranger," said she, "and perhaps you may be a comfort to him." Henry could not refuse compliance, and accordingly proceeded to the room whither he was directed to find Patrick Finnegan. The patient was a fine young man about thirty years of age, suffering under an acute rheumatic attack. He was one of the many adventurers who come over annually from Ireland, to mow and reap the harvest; and though few of them ever travel so far as to Hampshire, this man had ventured to do so through some particular inducement. On his return, however, he had imprudently slept a night in the open air, after a day of extreme labour and over excitement, and he had caught a cold, the effects of which he was now labouring under. The poor fellow was near the village of Lilybrook, when he took ill, and Mr. Leighton, hearing the circumstances of the case, had had him removed to the infirmary, under his own superintendence. He was exceedingly grateful to Mr. Leighton for this kindness; and when he saw Henry, supposing him to be one of the family, he poured forth his thanks in the glowing language of his native country. After a little conversation about his ailments—for Henry knew there is no road to the human heart so direct as that of sympathy,

and that the best and wisest will fail in their effort to do good to the soul, if they do not first show a participation in the feelings of the body—he asked him how he liked Mr. Leighton's visits and conversation.

“Oh! 'tis he that's the kind man, Sir; he's very kind entirely. More's the pity that it's a minister he is, and not a priest, or I'd be mighty glad to hear him.”

“Well, Pat, why not hear him, though he is a minister? At least the book he reads from is God's own book; the same that your clergy must learn from, as well as ours.”

Pat shook his head incredulously. “Not at all, sir, begging your honour's pardon; the Protestant Bible and ours has all the differ in the world; sure 'twas Luther and King Harry made yours, and ours was handed down by the blessed Pether himself to his successors.”

Poor Henry had never met with a Roman Catholic before, and was quite ignorant of their prejudices and mode of controversy; he had always conversed with people who believed in the verity of his Bible, whether they acted upon its instructions or not, and he now felt quite puzzled at the outset, at having to deal with a man who deprived him of the very foundation on which he was to build. The feeling that arose in his mind was self-abasing and salutary. How little, thought he, am I qualified to act as a missionary, or to go forth with any confidence, when I can be so easily embarrassed by an ignorant Roman

Catholic, whose learning, perhaps, does not go beyond a few lessons by rote; but I will not suffer myself to be baffled in this foolish way. I wonder what Theophilus would do.

Had Theophilus been in the same circumstances, he would have been in mental prayer for divine assistance to direct him in his words, and to incline the heart of the person he was visiting to listen with reverence, and hear with interest the message of holy truth; but Henry did not think of this.

Henry had heard of the Douay Bible, but he had never compared it with the English version, and therefore was not acquainted with the very slight difference existing between them; nor did he know (what, of late years, almost every well-informed person in Ireland is aware of) that the difference is greatly exaggerated by those who wish to prevent the poor from benefitting by the very extensive and cheap circulation of the Scriptures in that country. However, he boldly ventured to say, that he was sure Mr. Leighton would willingly instruct Pat out of his own Bible, if he had one; "for," said he, "the only difference is in the translation. You may lay blame on Luther, or King Harry, or on whom you please; but happily the original remains the same as it was in ages past; and Mr. Leighton, who understands the language in which it was written, could tell who was right, and who was wrong."

Pat shook his head again, as much as to say, "I would not trust to his opinion on that subject."

"Howsomever," said he, "it isn't now I'm to

learn my religion, for I'm a Carmelite, and got one o—f our Lady's blessed scapulars, afore I left Ireland, and if I miss the prayers one day, I make it up another —; so that it's all even at the end of the week, and I'm sure if I do get into purgatory, I'll only be there a little bit, for I've always been very constant to our Lady, (here he crossed his breast and forehead with his thumb,) and she'd get me out, I'll warrant. Ma—y be I'm putting some of the pains of purgatory over me now," he continued, writhing in the bed with a countenance of considerable anguish, "for I do be suffering greatly since I got these rheumatics."

Henry did not clearly comprehend the first part of this speech, but he caught at the latter hint, and asked him, "what he meant by putting some of the pains of purgatory over him."

"Why," said the man, surprised, "Isn't it suffering for my sins I am, and sure every pain I go through, wont it be so much towards making up for them, and bearing the punishment in this life, instead of hereafter?"

"But what then did Christ do for you?"

The man bowed his head at the mention of this name, but looked half offended at the question. "Why then, doesn't every child know that, that He died upon the cross for sinners?"

"And what are you, my friend?"

"Why then a'nt I a sinner, and sure enough He died for me too."

"And do you think His death was of any value?"

"Value! That's a quare question. Indeed and

“I do; and I think that every drop of His precious blood that was shed upon the cross, was worth millions of worlds, as the priest says.”

“Strange thing then, that it should not have been enough to redeem your single soul.”

“Why, sir, how is that? It is enough, and more than enough for every body.”

“Then you think the Lord Jesus did the whole work that was necessary, to redeem the world, and that His love left nothing undone?”


Bowing his head again, he replied, “Indeed I do, sir; shame on me if I didn’t.”

“How then, my friend, do you imagine your sufferings here, or your going through purgatory hereafter, will be of any use, if, as you acknowledge, the Lord has paid the whole price of your redemption? Surely it must be not only unnecessary, but offensive to Him, to have His creatures trusting Him and His sufferings only in part, while they are endeavouring to make up the remainder with their own paltry endeavours at expiation. Besides, we are promised acceptance only through Him; all that we do is polluted with sin, and the greatest agonies we could endure, would not wash out a single stain from our souls. He is the pure unblemished sacrifice, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world; and He alone is the sure refuge, if we take Him without doubting, and without reserve, as our substitute.”

Patrick listened in silence and attention. “There’s some truth in what you say, sir, and it would be mighty comfortable to me, if I could just think as

you do ; it would save me a world of trouble, if I thought all my salvation was *done* for me, and that I wasn't to be working and toiling at it myself, and may be die before it was half done, and then have to finish it in the fires of purgatory, in another world. But, sir, tell truth now. Supposing a man b'lieves all you say, and knows his sins are all pardoned for the sake of Him who is blessed for ever, still is not there some little thing to be done for him, to make him fit company for the holy angels and saints? A poor, worldly, toilsome man, like myself now : sure I'd be ashamed to go among the likes of them *quality*, without purifying myself a little in purgatory ; but you Protestants teach that we may just jump up to heaven as we are."

Henry could scarcely keep from smiling at Pat's mode of expressing his ideas ; but feeling that the point aimed at was an important one, he endeavoured to retain his gravity, and enter into the subject. He explained (as well as he could, to a person who would not allow a quotation from *his* Scriptures, to have any authority) the work of regeneration, effected in the heart of those who thoroughly believe in the Lord Jesus, by the Holy Spirit ; that it has a purifying influence, and gives hatred to sin, as well as victory over it, and that the soul thus endued with power from on high, needs no corporeal sufferings to cleanse away its moral pollution, but is made meet, through a much higher and more effectual process, to be a partaker of the inheritance with the saints in light.



The poor man did not seem qualified to dispute these doctrines, but long habit of exercising his thoughts in another track, made him slow and unwilling to grant them reception. He took Henry's visit very kindly, however, and did not let him depart, without begging he would soon come again, and talk more to him about these things, and give his duty to the *old master*, and the *young master*, (Mr. Leighton and Theophilus,) with his hopes, they would call in upon their poor Irish stranger very often.

Henry met Miss Percy below stairs, in the work room of the poor-house ; she had finished her reading to the invalids of the female ward ; but it would prolong this chapter too much, if the particulars were related, as we must now accompany her and Henry and Jessie to the infant school.

The building called by this name, was nothing more than a nice cottage with two rooms, sheltered under some fine tall trees. It had a nice little railed garden in front, laid out in broad walks, and grass lots ; but a few pretty flowers were trained against the cottage wall, and there was a narrow stripe of earth all round the paling, appropriated to vegetables and little fruit trees. " In this cottage," said Miss Percy, as they approached it, " lives a good woman, who has seen better days, as the phrase goes ; that is, she was once a little higher in the world, and in the esteem of her neighbours, than she now appears. There was a time when she had a comfortable farm of her own, and a kind husband, and several children : but the Lord permitted both property and rela-

tives to be taken away from her, that she might seek her *all* in *himself*. While she possessed any other good, she never sought His favour. In the full enjoyment of her worldly prosperity, she thought herself rich, and having need of nothing, not knowing, that in His eyes who seeth not as man seeth, she was only poor and miserable, and blind and naked, not possessing one thing of true value: but her better days, in Christian language, came at length; when the world was taken from her feet, as a resting place; when her heart was rent asunder, to break it from its idols; and she had nothing left for refuge, but the open arms of Divine Mercy. Thither she fled, and found peace—peace such as she had never known, when her affections were bound up in earthly objects. There she found riches—durable riches, which no tide of evil fortune could ever take from her: an unfailing sympathizing friend, which death could not separate from her: a well spring of inexhaustible blessedness, to supply the wants and wishes of an immortal mind." Miss Percy went on to mention, that the superior sense and amiability, as well as Christian devotedness, which had been manifested by Mrs. Benson, under severe trials, in which they had seen her exercised, had induced Mrs. Leighton and herself to make many exertions to procure for her some comfortable and respectable situation; but all their efforts had proved for a long time unavailing: meantime they were looking out for a matron, to superintend an infant school, which they were going to establish on a small scale;

! were greatly surprised to find Mrs. Benson offer services for the situation ; as they considered her racter, rank and abilities, entitled her to look for of a superior kind ; they reasoned with her about and laid its difficulties and small advantages before ; but she humbly and modestly persisted in her rest of being afforded a trial. She said she loved society of children much, and it would be an ortunity she greatly coveted, of doing something ie service of her loved Master. " I would like to : these dear infants," said she, " and train them for 1 ; too happy, too honoured, to be allowed to d in the steps of those believing mothers, who ight young children in their arms, to be blessed the Lord Jesus : knowing I shall not be ked."

Mrs. Leighton and Miss Percy, resisted her im- unity no longer ; and felt no small thankfulness, so suitable a person was willing to undertake nportant a duty. The school was soon opened, ie nice little cottage I have described. Lord G. ributed a few pounds towards fitting up the ol-room, with a gallery and lesson stands : the ures and tablets, with the singing lessons were ured from London ; and an itinerant master e from the institution at Chelsea, to initiate Mrs. son in the peculiarity of the system ; and train first set of infants into order. The plan had been in operation for more than a year, and succeeded in the most satisfactory manner. Benson seemed perfectly happy, and regarded

the babes with a mother's love : nor was her attachment or kindness unrequited. Upwards of forty little children attended this school, (which was nearly in the centre of the village,) most of them between the ages of two and six years. Miss Percy, Elizabeth, and Mrs. Leighton, visited them in turn, almost every day ; and the little ones delighted to see them ; and generally chanted a couplet of their own composing, taking in the name of whatever individual they saw approaching from the rectory, weaving it with their little song. On this occasion, the afternoon being far advanced, they were at play in the garden. When Miss Percy drew near, they immediately shouted out,

“Miss Percy is coming—*good children today,*
We'll hear a nice story—huzza ! huzza !”*

Henry laughed very much, when he heard this rhyme ; and Miss Percy and Jessie could not help laughing too, which encouraged the children to go on singing ; till Mrs. Benson appeared at the cottage door, with a little bell in her hand, the gentle sound of which instantly silenced them ; and they remained perfectly quiet, while Miss Percy and her party walked up the middle of the garden to meet Mrs. Benson. “Do you think they all deserve a story today, Mrs. Benson ?” said she ; “are there no disobedient, or quarrelsome, or idle little ones to be excluded ?” “Indeed I think not, ma'am : they have pleased me very well, and I hope you will kindly indulge them as usual. There is nothing seems to encourage them so much, as the hope of hearing your story ; and I

* The infant school scenes are from facts.

un propose no greater punishment, than exclusion from it."

"I thought," said Miss Percy, "to have come a little earlier, and to have showed the movements of your system to this young friend of ours; but as it is so late I am afraid I must defer that to another day, and tell my story now; for I don't like to disappoint them. I am, however, not quite sure (turning to Henry) that it will be so interesting to *you* to hear a *baby* tale; so pray do not let your politeness and kindness keep you waiting on me; you may feel tired."

Henry assured her he would like very much to hear her relate a story suited to such young children. It would puzzle me very much," said he, "to tell them any thing instructive in such a way as to entertain, or keep on a level with their understandings."

"I am thinking, Henry," replied Miss Percy, "that you under-rate the capacities of the infants who are educated under this system. You do not know how rapidly it unfolds their ideas, and how great a difference is soon manifest between two children of the same ages and apparent powers, but who have been taught, one upon the old plan of education, and the other upon the new. However, you must judge for yourself." So saying, she led the way into the school-room, where the infants immediately took their places in the gallery; and, quietness being established, she took a seat just opposite to them, the rest of the party being in the back ground, and thus commenced her promised story:

“ Now, my little children, be attentive. There was once a little girl, named Mary Browne, who was so happy as to be allowed to attend an infant school. She was six years old, and being steady and quiet in her behaviour, her mother did not think it necessary to go with her to the school *every* day ; for she was a poor woman, who had her bread to earn by selling oranges and cakes in the streets, and it would have been very inconvenient to her to leave her stand and walk with Mary in the mornings. Little Mary had also the care of a brother, one year younger than herself, a fine lively little boy, who was often troublesome to her when he was walking in the road, sometimes running on before her, sometimes lagging behind ; and once he threw his cap into the middle of the street, just before a high-spirited horse, which was trotting up, and caused him to start and plunge, so as nearly to throw off his back the man who was riding him. You may suppose poor Mary was at times a little vexed, when he would not mind her advice, and stay quiet ; but on this occasion she was very much frightened, and caught him by the hand, and told him, if he was not more quiet and sober in the street, she would have to tell the mistress at the school, or else leave him at home the next day. Little Willy (for that was her brother’s name) did not like to be left at home at all, so he promised to behave better the rest of the way ; but though he did not again do any thing so foolish as to frighten a horse, he was very restless and troublesome, for he was a self-willed little fellow, and liked to please *himself*

er than any one else. Well, at length they came to the school, and the mistress, Mrs. Bond, who was a very kind woman, opened the door when she heard the little voices; and first she made them wipe their faces clean on the mat. They had no shoes, but their bare feet were covered with mud, and they would have left a dirty track on the nice clean washed floor, if she had not been so particular. She then took off Mary's bonnet and Willy's cap, and hung them up, as it was right to do, in the proper place; she looked at their hands and faces, to see if they were quite clean, and had their hair combed; and then she took down two little tidy, blue-striped bibs, and put them on, before she led the children to their seats in the gallery. Now, you shall hear all about this school, and how they were taught by the kind mistress, and how the little ones behaved during the lesson. And, first, they all stood up, and sung a hymn. I dare say you will know it, when I tell you that it began with these words: "*How glorious is our heavenly King!*" Some of the little ones had weak voices, and scarcely knew how to join in the tune; that was no great matter, if they tried to do it, while they were thinking of the meaning of the words, and sing God in their hearts. Then they all knelt down, and joined in a prayer with the mistress, while she asked the Lord to bless all the young children who loved Him, and to make them holy and obedient. Some of them, I'm afraid, did not think much about it while they were kneeling; they did not try and remember how the Lord Jesus Christ had loved them,

and had come into the world to die for them, **and** how kind and good He is to invite little children to come to Him, and receive his blessing. No ; but I **will** tell you what, I believe, some of them were thinking of, by the manner they acted. Little Willy Browne (of whom I was speaking before) had raised up his eyes and fixed them on a picture on the opposite wall. It was a picture of an elephant, a great big creature, you know, that has a long trunk above his mouth, by means of which he helps himself to food. See ! there is a picture of one on the wall."

Mrs. Benson raised a little wand and pointed to it, and Miss Percy resumed.

"Willy had heard, that in the country where these creatures are reared, the people use them to ride, not exactly as we do horses, but they construct little wooden houses or towers, and fasten them on their backs, and then two or three men get into them, and are carried about by the elephants wherever they wish to go. Now, Willy had his head full of this story, and he was whispering to Joe Martin, the boy next him how nice it would be to get one of those little wooden towers to play with. A little behind these, Lucy Felton was counting her fingers and the panes of glass in the window, to see which were the greater number. Farther on, Peggy Lynan was looking down at a pair of shoes on the feet of a little girl, who had never appeared with such a comfortable article before, and she was wondering where she got them, and wishing she had a pair also. One little boy had slyly got his slate and cutter, and was scratching

figures, while his back was turned to Mrs. Bond, and she thought he was praying; and another was trying to catch a spider, which was weaving its long thread at the corner of the wall and the gallery. Now, if it had been any time but the time of prayer, what these little children were doing would have been, comparatively, of little consequence. *What might we have called them, when they were not saying or doing any thing for the benefit of themselves or others ?*"

"IDLE."

"Yes, surely; but when we consider in what they ought to have been engaged at that particular time, what shall we then say they were ?"

"FOOLISH and WICKED."

"Alas! just so. They were *foolish*, because they thought no one was looking at or minding what they were about, when the eye of their mistress was not upon them. But there was One Eye saw them, and marked it all! *Whose do you think ?*"

"THE EYE OF GOD."

"You are very right. And they were *wicked*, because they were not minding their duty to God, which is to serve, and honor, and love him. *How do we know that we are to serve God ?* If you do not remember, or have never heard, I will tell you: it is in the First Commandment, 'Thou shalt have no other gods but me.' (Exod. xx. 3.) And it is written in another place, 'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.' (Matt. iv. 10.)

“ After the prayer, the little children were led to the lesson-stands, and some of them were taught their letters, A, B, C ; and some learned to spell, *a*, *b*, *ab* ; and some could spell longer words, and read little sentences ; and others were learning to read the names and descriptions of different animals, and the uses that are made of them by man—with nice coloured pictures to help them to remember all they heard. Little Willy Browne belonged to this class ; but his sister Mary, who was beginning to read very well, was taken aside, with a few others, who could also read, into a small quiet room, where, in order to encourage and reward their progress, they were allowed to learn a nicer lesson than the rest. A lady, named Miss Wilton, attended to teach them, and she held in her hand the book called the New Testament, which contains the history of the blessed Jesus, our Lord and Saviour, who came into this wicked world, to die for sinners, and to save all who would come to Him and believe upon him : and the lady made every little child read a verse, or two, out of this book, and then she asked them little questions, such as they could understand : and when the little children read about the love of the Lord Jesus to all the people who were about Him—how he opened the eyes of blind men, and gave tongues to dumb men, and gave lame people power to walk, and sick people strength to get well ; and above all, when they read how He took little children in his arms, and blessed them, and bid them come to Him, and was displeased with those who would have kept

them away, they felt great love and gratitude to Him, and wished very much they could see Him now, as the people did in those days. Then Miss Wilton told them, that though their eyes could not behold Him, the Lord Jesus was present with them at that moment, just as much as He had been when he walked on the earth, and that He loved little children as much now as He did then, and wished to be kind to them, and to prove Himself their best friend; and she told them, that all he required of them was, to give Him their young hearts, and that if they did so, they would be careful to please Him in every thing: and she told them, that to please the Lord Jesus was the same thing as to please God, because He was the Son of God. Then she asked them, did they know of any thing that was displeasing to God; and the little children answered readily, (for they had been often taught it,) that to tell a lie, or to steal, or to play on the Sabbath day, or to use the name of God without thought and reverence, or to disobey their parents, were all sinful and displeasing to God; besides many other things, which I have not time to tell you. And then Miss Wilton asked them what they thought would please Him? and little Mary Browne said, it would please him if they loved one another; for she had learned the text, 'This is my commandment, that ye love one another.'* A girl named Jane Smyth, said, it would please Him if we prayed to Him;

* John, xv. 18.

and when she could not find a text in the Testament to prove this, the lady showed her our Saviour's words, '*Ask, and ye shall receive.*'* And again, '*Men ought always to pray and not to faint.*'† And, '*Pray without ceasing.*'‡ A little boy named Johnny Burke said it would please the Lord Jesus, if we were meek and lowly of heart; and he told the words, for he had learnt them the day before in his lesson. '*Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest to your souls.*'§

"Miss Wilton was much pleased with the little children's attention, and promised she would tell them something new the next day. After these instructions they were all brought again to join the rest of the school, and they marched about, and sang their little singing lessons, till it was time to go out in the garden and play. Now, the garden was very nicely laid out with gravel-walks, and a green grass-plot and trees, which threw a pleasant shade when the sun was hot; and there was plenty of room for the little children to play in it; but one small part was railed off for the mistress to plant cabbages, and potatoes, and onions, and any other little vegetables she might want; and the children were not allowed to go into this part, and indeed it was the least pretty and inviting of the whole garden, and the little gate which led to it was always kept locked. However, it happened that little

* Matt. vii. 7.

† Luke, xvii. 1.

‡ Thess. i. 17.

§ Matt. xi. 29.

Willy Browne grew tired of playing with his companions, and longed to pass over into the forbidden ground; but he was too small to climb over the gate, and the only way he could get in, was by squeezing himself through the paling; so the poor foolish child looked for the widest place he could get, and first, he forced his head through, and then his hand, and then one of his feet; but he did not perceive, when putting in his foot, that a large rusty nail was sticking out of the wood; it pierced his tender little flesh to the bone; and as he was in a position which prevented him from being able to escape, he uttered the most painful screams, which brought all his companions, as well as the mistress, to his relief. The poor child was in great agony, and the blood streamed fast from his wound. The mistress, who was a very kind woman, took him up in her arms; and she did not scold him or beat him, though he had been such a disobedient boy; for she saw he was very sorely punished by the pain he felt. She brought him into the house, and laid him on the bed, till his mother could be sent for, who cried sadly, when she saw her little boy in such pain. Mrs. Bond advised her to bring him immediately to the dispensary, that the doctor there might dress the wound; which was very good advice, for very few people know how to do such things properly except doctors, and when we delay getting their advice, the case may become past cure. Poor Mrs. Browne brought the child home, and took care of him for two or three days in her own way, but finding

he was growing very bad, she at last took him to the dispensary, and showed him to the doctor. The wound had festered considerably, because it had been improperly treated; but, as the child was healthy, the doctor said he hoped soon to cure him if his directions were strictly followed: so he ordered Willy to be kept quiet, and not to be allowed to walk or run about, and to have a plaster applied to his foot. The little boy did not like to be kept quiet, and he fretted, and vexed himself very much, because he could not follow his own wayward inclinations; and he watched every opportunity of jumping off his bed, and creeping about the room, when his mother or Mary were not at hand to watch him, and bring him what he wanted; for Willy Browne had a heart just like the heart in other little boys and girls, fond of its own way, and careless about pleasing God, or obeying its parents. Mary used to tell him, every day, the stories she heard in the infant school—beautiful stories out of the Bible, and describe the pictures she had seen; and sometimes sing her hymns for him, and then he used to be pleased and amused for a while: but in general his conduct was full of impatience, and his temper easily provoked. At length, one day when he was nearly well, but not quite enough so to return to school, Mary being there as usual, Mrs. Browne left her home for half an hour, to buy some articles she wanted, in a shop. She left Willy sitting on the bed, and charging him not to leave his place, or go near the fire till her return, she locked the door and

went her way. At first Willy attended to his mother's command; but after a while, becoming restless, he stole down from the bed, and limped over to the fire: it was getting low; two or three coals had been left in a heap by his mother, who intended to add to them when she came home, in order to boil the potatoes. But Willy wanted amusement, and careless of the consequences, took a stick which he found in the corner, and putting it into the coals, was delighted to find it catch a flame. The poor foolish little boy then drew it out, to admire the bright sparks while he swung it round his head in a circle. But, alas! one of the sparks, without his perceiving it, dropped on his bib, and in a moment or two his whole dress was on fire: his screams for assistance soon brought the neighbours to the door, who, with some difficulty, forced it open, and immediately wrapping the child in a blanket, extinguished the flames; but he was so severely burnt in his feet and limbs, as to present a sad sight. The skin was quite gone in some places, and scorched up in others; and his poor little flesh was so red and sore that no one could have seen him without pity. My dear little children who now hear this story, think of the cause of poor Willy's misfortunes. If he had not been disobedient and wilful, he would not have crept through the garden rail, in the first instance, and thus hurt himself so much as to be confined at home for a long time, in order to be cured: and his staying at home exposed him to the danger and temptation he fell into respecting the fire,

which, if he had been well enough to go to school might have been avoided. His poor mother, you may well suppose, had a sad heart when she saw her Willy, and heard his groans, for he was in great pain. The doctor from the dispensary came as soon as he was informed of the accident, and tried to do every thing he could to relieve him. For two or three days he had some hopes of his recovery, although the injury was very extensive; but at length symptoms of mortification appeared, under which poor Willy sunk rapidly.

“He was now entirely confined to bed, as you may suppose, and his sister Mary was deprived of going to school also, for she stayed to mind her poor brother, and attend to all his wants. He was so sick, and suffered so much pain, that he lost all his lively spirits, and lay all day on his little hard rug, without speaking, or seeming to care much about any thing. Sometimes the kind doctor would bring him an apple in his pocket, or an orange, or a little book of pictures, to rouse and amuse him, but he seemed quite dull, and to take scarcely any notice. His sister Mary was very sorry to see him in this state, and she used to take his head on her lap, and coax and kiss him: and sometimes she would sing one of her Infant-school hymns for him, or remind him of some of the pretty stories they used to hear. One day she began to sing this hymn:

‘ There is beyond the sky
A heaven of joy and love,
And holy children, when they die,
Go to that world above.’

“ Oh, nice pretty hymn, said Willy : sing again
Mary, sing again. She went on :

‘ There is a dreadful hell,
And everlasting pains,
Where sinners must with devils dwell
In darkness, fire, and chains.’

“ Willy began to scream and cry, ‘ Stop Mary,
stop. I will not die ; I will not go to *darkness*,
fire, and chains.’

‘ *Sinners*, brother Willy, it was *sinners* I said,
not you.’

‘ But, Mary,’ said the little boy, ‘ I am a sinner,
Oh ! I am a sinner.’

‘ Darling Willy,’ said she, ‘ why do you say so?’

‘ Because I was always disobedient, and running
into mischief, and that is the way I got this hurt.
Oh ! Mary, I cannot die, I will not die.’

“ Mary began to cry, and her brother cried too :
she did not know what to say to comfort him. At
last she said, ‘ Willy, I have learned to sing an-
other verse that may comfort you. We have often
sung it in school, but maybe you did not mind it ;
and she sung :

‘ A sinner, Lord, behold I stand
In thought, and word, and deed ;
But *Jesus* sits at thy right hand,
For such to intercede.’

‘ Oh ! brother, think of our Saviour, Jesus : he
died upon the cross for you and me ; and now he
is praying for us at God’s right hand—you know
that is the meaning of *intercede.*’

‘Mary, Mary, does he love me?’ said the little boy.

‘Yes, Willy, yes; just come to him, and ask him to look down upon you. You know mistress says, he is not far off from any of us; and will hear when we cry to Him.’

‘Oh! Mary, He will not mind *me*!’

‘Yes, Willy, he cares for little sparrows; dont you know how often you heard that—and sure he will care for you. Pray to Him, brother, pray.’

‘I cannot pray; I dont know how,’ returned Willy; ‘pray for me, Mary; say words for me.’

“Then little Mary knelt down, and she repeated the beginning of another little hymn she had learnt at school; for all she knew about religion had been taught her there; and she said slowly and reverently:

‘Lord, teach a little child to pray;
Thy grace betimes impart,
And grant thy Holy Spirit may
Renew my infant heart.’

‘Say it again, Mary,’ said Willy: and when she had said it a second time, he bid her say it yet again; and then the poor little fellow joined in repeating the last line, which he said over and over. *Renew my infant heart; renew my infant heart.* and while he was saying them, Miss Wilton came slowly and quietly into the room, and saw how the children were employed, and she came over kindly, and took little Willy’s hand, and said she was glad to hear him praying that prayer: and she talked to

on sweetly about the love of the Lord Jesus for the children, and how he had promised to send his holy Spirit to renew and cleanse their hearts, and how his blood shed upon the cross atoned for the sins of every one that believed upon Him, and that whosoever came to Him He would in no wise cast it. Then she wiped away the tears from little Willy's eyes, and kissed him, and gave him her blessing; and she put a nice little jar of jam upon a stool, by his bedside, that he might take a spoonful when his mouth was dry, and said she would come on and see him again.

"But little Willy did not live to see her again. The mortification spread rapidly every hour, notwithstanding all the kind doctor could do; but his mind grew more comfortable, and he thought over and over of all that had been said to him about Jesus, till at last he began to love him, and to long to see Him, in all his glory and sweetness, beaming upon him. He said to his sister Mary the evening at he died, 'I long to die, sister Mary; I am happy now; I am not afraid of blessed Jesus. I want some body to sing about heaven. Call them, Mary, to sing about heaven.'

"Mary ran in to her little companions, who lived near, and who also attended the Infant-school, and she brought them to Willy's bedside, and they all began to sing:

'There is a land of pure delight,
Where saints immortal reign;
Infinite day excludes the night,
And pleasures banish pain.

There everlasting spring abides,
And never with'ring flowers.
Death, like a narrow sea, divides
This heavenly land from ours,' &c.

"It was a sweet, solemn thing, to see all these dear little children, round the bed of their dying companion, joining their little voices to cheer him in his last hours; and his mother and father stood by weeping; for they could not say a word, seeing the sweet child was going home to glory. He lay quite placid while they sung, till they came to the last line, and then he threw up his little hand triumphantly, and said, '*The heavenly land, the heavenly land!* Yes, I am going to Jesus, my Lord and Saviour; come all of you, come WITH ME!' and with these words, his head sunk down upon the pillow, a slight convulsion passed over his face, his breath became hard and labored for a few moments, and then all was still. His young spirit was released from pain and sorrow for ever, and he was now enabled to rejoice in the presence of that Saviour who had loved him, and called him away so early, from this world of sin and temptation. His little companions could not help weeping when they saw he was gone for ever; and his little sister, Mary, sobbed bitterly, when she found she could no longer be of use to him, and that he could not hear her voice when she spoke to him. She leaned over his pale, still face, and cried, 'Open your eyes, brother Willy—darling brother, open your eyes, and look at me.' But Willy moved not, nor noticed her sad and earnest

cry. In the mean time the doctor entered the room ; and when he saw that all was over, and that the parents of Willy, and so many of his little companions were around his bed weeping, he could scarcely keep from tears, and he spoke very kindly to them, and advised them to compose themselves. 'Death,' said he, 'is the punishment of sin, which we must all, young and old, go through ; but it can only destroy our bodies, at the present, till our Saviour fulfils his promise of raising them up beautiful and glorious, at the last day. And those who die, trusting their souls to him, need fear no evil, for He receives them as soon as they leave their poor, sickly, worn-out bodies, behind, and makes them inexpressibly happy in his presence for ever. Our poor little Willy, who is now, I trust, with his Saviour, Jesus, received his death-blow in consequence of wilful disobedience ; and, perhaps, if he had lived longer, and had the same health, he might have grown up stubborn and rebellious ; but the Lord, who loved his soul, saw it good to take him away early, from temptation, and he was pleased to renew his infant heart, and take away his unholy dispositions before this last hour arrived. Now, go home, little children, and try to be faithful and obedient to your parents and your mistress, and remember all the little verses and hymns you learn in the infant school, for they will help you to live holy, and to die happy.'"

Some tears were shed by the tender-hearted little audience, while Miss Percy related the latter part of

this story, which she did in the soft and gentle tone that shewed her own sympathy, and excited that of others; yet, when it was entirely concluded, and they perceived Miss Percy was about to depart, they raised a loud clapping of the hands, as a sign of thanks and approbation: this was repeated three times, and quite upset Henry's gravity a second time; for he was not sufficiently acquainted with the nature of children, to understand their rapid transitions of feeling, from grave to gay, from depression to buoyant excitement.

He seemed much amused by their manners, and by the whole scenery of the school-room, which was quite new to him, and regretted much the hour was too late to detain the children for the display of their exercises. They sung, however, a sweet little hymn for him, at Miss Percy's request, and surprised him greatly with the harmony the little voices produced in concert, and the time and ear with which the tune was sustained. He was obliged, reluctantly, to leave them when it was concluded, for Miss Percy said she had finished her business for the day, and must now return home.

CHAPTER VIII.

Nor deem our shelter all secure
Even in the church's holiest aisle.

CHRISTIAN YEAR.

A DAY or two after the events recorded in the last chapter, Mr. Leighton and his two sons being in conversation with Henry Villeroi after dinner, the latter mentioned the case of poor Patrick Finnegan, in the infirmary, and asked Mr. Leighton whether he often visited and conversed with him. The good pastor replied—"I have visited him often, indeed, since he came under my charge; but till within a few days past, he has been too ill to bear much conversation; and I have, therefore, avoided it, though I offered once or twice, to read to him a little from the Scriptures."

"And how did he receive the offer, Sir?"

"Why, in rather an equivocal way—he neither assented nor refused; but, interpreting his silence into acquiescence, I read to him, and spoke on some

of the most important doctrines of Christianity; but how did *you* get on, Henry, in your visit? I hope you did not attempt controversy."

"Not willingly, Sir, indeed; but to escape it altogether would have been difficult;" and here Henry related all that had passed between himself and the poor Irishman.

"There is nothing," said Theophilus, (when he had concluded,) "that I feel so delicate or so difficult a part of ministerial duty, as that which involves one in discussion with Roman Catholics."

"Why so?" asked Mr. Leighton.

"Because I feel that truth and error are so strangely interwoven in their system, that you can scarcely touch the one without more or less injuring the other. It is easy to overturn Popery, it is true; but so skilfully has she incorporated the vital truths of Christianity into her system, that she rises upon these again and again, and boldly faces her opponents upon this indestructible vantage ground; attack her upon an error and she is sure to retreat into a truth; and thus the tares and the wheat having been growing together, and for ages past: I always feel afraid of rooting up the one, lest I should pluck away the other also.

"But, Theophilus," returned his father, "the great feature of Popery is, that she has so managed to neutralize and make void these vital truths, that her system is as dangerous and unsound as if she acknowledged them not; she has taken the doctrine of the Atonement and made it of no effect, by draw-

ing off attention to the numberless modes of washing away sin, which she has in her spiritual treasury; the doctrine of sanctification by the Spirit, she admits into her creed, but renders nugatory by allowing man to purify his own heart. She divides the allegiance due to God only, and sets up numerous demi-deities, some of whom are regarded with more love and admiration than the Most High himself; and she makes a mock of devotion, by instructing her followers to offer up a quantity of words inapplicable, misunderstood and wearisome, instead of the devout breathings of the loving heart; the only worship which the Lord has said he will accept. Did it ever strike you," he continued, "that the very first decline of the primitive church, and its consequent lapse into those errors, since developed fully in the system of Popery, commenced in its acting upon received truths; but gradually blending them with human opinions, instead of trying them, from time to time, by the word of God?"

"In what instances, father," asked Philip, "do you trace these declensions?"

"Perhaps one of the first was the setting up of *creatures*, as models of veneration and imitation, instead of the Lord Jesus himself. This was very natural; and especially in an age when the standard of Christianity stood high, and those who bore the name of believers were ready to die for their Master's cause; nevertheless, it led to various errors—first, the models being imperfect, the copies were necessarily more so; for the defects and false views of

those fallible beings were seldom separated from their virtues, and the whole character became alike an object of blind imitation ; days were dedicated to the remembrance of these departed worthies, and divine worship celebrated among their tombs. It is manifest how easy was the transition from this enthusiastic admiration into gross idolatry ; from contemplation of their glorified spirits in heaven, to that of their decaying bodies on earth ; till, at length, the object, which was to stimulate survivors to a holy emulation of the dead, being nearly lost sight of, they descended into a low and childish regard for the very relics of the dust, their bones and garments, attributing to them miraculous power, and health-giving energy.

“ In the early ages of primitive religion, there seems to have been a pure and holy zeal for God, which burned like a lambent flame, carrying the believer triumphantly through every difficulty and danger, for his sake. It appears to me, that it must have been on the decline of this fervour, that attempts were made to excite it anew ; not by applying to the Holy Spirit for a fresh baptism of love, but by introducing stimulants to the natural passions and affections. Thus, paintings of the highest order were hung up in places of public worship, calculated to stir up all the strong, natural feelings of horror, sympathy, compassion, gratitude, &c. Music, that powerful master of the human mind, was introduced with the same view, and these, united or severally, often succeeded in raising a

purious imitation of heavenly fervour, which deceived and satisfied the minds of many, and kept them from feeling or deploring the real loss they had sustained.

“The third great evil was the admission of *legends* and *traditions*, adding to the Scriptures, and *new revelations*, containing things *contrary* to them: the tendency of these was to divert the mind from the all-important and solemn truths of the gospel; to trammel it with external observances, which hindered and perplexed its spiritual progress; and to cultivate the imagination till it worked itself up into false ecstasies, looking for and expecting things which God had not promised, and forgetting those which he had.

“In the fourth place, they fell into the error of the Jews in *literalizing* the Scriptures too much; looking for Christ’s *triumphant* reign sooner than it was promised; and seeing He was to rule, and be acknowledged as Head of the Church, and King of the whole earth, those Christians who had sunk into a carnalized state, required their faith to be kept up, either by seeing himself with their bodily eyes, or a fleshly representative of Him. Probably, thus originated the pretensions of the pope, whose claim to spiritual, soon merged into *temporal* supremacy also.”

“There seems to be some strong grounds for such a theory,” said Theophilus; “and I would further add, that it is the natural tendency of the old carnal mind, thus to mix and weaken the things of God, from the times of primitive Christianity to the

present, and that there is no other way of keeping firmly to truth, but by bringing every principle—every notion we entertain, to the word of God, and trying whether it is to be found *there* or not. And, to enable us to have a right judgment of that word, we must abide close—*close* to the Lord Jesus; we shall neither have safety nor vigor, nor spiritual health, except while we walk in His shadow, and follow His steps.”

“While my father was speaking of the errors which arose from *decline* and *deficiency* in the primitive church,” remarked Philip, “I could not help thinking that *excesses* produced just as many evils; but both springing from the very same source, viz. substitution of human opinion, and human standards, for the divine oracles.

“For instance, I should think the invention of purgatory arose from a kindly loving feeling, abounding in excess, in some Christian breasts, and forbidding them to contemplate the eternal punishment of any living soul. And not being able to reconcile the divine attributes of love and justice, they contrived this plan of their own devising, without searching, as they should have done, into the revealed mind of Deity.

“Perhaps the doctrine of transubstantiation proceeded from an excess of blind, irrational faith, which did not exercise itself soundly upon the declarations of our Lord and his apostles. Excessive but mistaken humility, induced people to undergo voluntary mortifications and penances, on which

wards arose the superstructure of pride and righteousness. An overpowering sense of the ills and evils of the world, unaccompanied by a clear view of the relative duties of mankind, and the grace that was promised to keep believers from the pollutions of it, might have been the basis of the first religious orders—of hermits and monks—of vows of voluntary poverty, &c.”

Very possible,” said Mr. Leighton. “It is, therefore, well to trace evil to its first beginnings, thus we learn practical lessons of wisdom for our guidance. From your observations, Philip, I should be led to conclude that it is dangerous to take a narrow or limited view of any single truth or principle, lest it should, in time, absorb the mind so as to exclude a contemplation of the others, and lead to an erroneous choice of conduct. The *excess* you speak of is no more than this, giving *undue* pre-eminence to *one idea*, for, properly speaking, we can have *no excess* of any Christian virtue or grace. It is our privilege and duty, earnestly to cultivate them, but not so to cultivate them that they may blend in a confused harmony, each having its due proportion, and bearing its part in the Christian character. If we are sedulous in thus seeking to have *the mind that was in Christ*, we shall be preserved from running into those extremes which, indeed, are the absence of *romance* in religion; which substitute *sentiment* for *reality*; wild notions for sound truths; blind devotion for the service of the heart; *sacrifices* which the Lord has *not* required, for the *obedience* which he *has*.”

"Your mention of the romance of religion," said Henry, "reminds me that the very period, called the dark age, in European history, was the most fruitful in this very species of romantic and exciting, but uninfluential religion. It was the æra of the crusaders, of the fantastic enthusiasm of chivalry; and, while the glory of the cross was the cause assumed, and the divine blessing the object ostensibly sought, pride, ambition, and ferocious courage, were all ranked under the sacred banner, and mistaken for the pure zeal of Christian devotedness."

While Mr. Leighton and his sons were thus conversing with their friend, a servant opened the door, and approaching Henry, presented him with a letter. As he appeared anxious to read it, Mr. Leighton begged he would not mind the interruption, nor the presence of his friends, but proceed to peruse the contents. Accordingly, he broke the seal, and discovered it was from his mother; it contained information of a peculiarly interesting nature; stating that his eldest sister was about to be married to a Mr. Vincent, a gentleman who had been paying his addresses for some time, and with whom the family were on intimate terms. He was a man of large fortune and religious habits, and had succeeded in winning the affections of Louisa Villeroi. Henry was requested to conclude his visit at the rectory, and take leave of his friends as soon as he could with propriety, his presence being required immediately at Brighton, to assist in preparation for the approaching marriage.

Part of the letter he read aloud, and it was

evident that Mr. Leighton and his sons regretted the necessity of Henry's leaving them so soon; he seemed also, much concerned himself; and said, that if he did not hope to renew the same pleasures and privileges, by returning to them at some future time, he could scarcely bring himself now to submit to the separation. Theophilus looked particularly cast down, and throwing his arm in a sort of half embrace, round his young friend, exclaimed, "Oh! my Henry, my brother! you are going into a scene of trial—a scene that will divert your spirits, that will attract you earthward, that will fill you with many thoughts, and those not of heavenly birth. You will have much to do, much to contend with, if you would be spiritually-minded; and have need to put on the whole armor of God."

"Why, my kind, good friend," said the sanguine and buoyant Henry, looking smilingly in his face, "you are very dismal in your anticipations. I know I shall have a great loss in the want of your society, and that of the dear people I leave behind me here; but, otherwise, I cannot see any peculiar danger in the change of circumstances; all my friends, you know, are more or less serious. The wedding will not, I dare say, be very gay; for my sister is a religious woman, and Vincent an excellent creature; and, except seeing a little more company, and perhaps going on some parties or excursions, I shall not be exposed to more dissipation of mind than ordinary."

Theophilus sighed. "I hate your sighs, Leighton,

they never bode me any good. Why should you distrust me *now*, especially after I have been in such good training for this some time past, with your good father and mother, and your estimable aunt Harriet; not to mention yourself, Oh sapient Theophilus!"

"Well, Henry, dont trifle now, for I am in solemn earnest. The reason I am anxious about you is simply this—because you are not *anxious enough* about yourself. You do not sufficiently calculate upon the weakness, I will not say of *your* nature, but of human nature in general, when exposed to the enjoyments and flatteries with which it has peculiar congeniality. You do not anticipate the laborious up-hill work which must be accomplished by the Christian, when he is to live in the world, as not of the world; when he is to be stemming against a current of earthly-mindedness; of circumstances, which every moment link him with the world, and have a tendency to win his affections and shake his allegiance to God."

"But, Leighton, as I said before, *my* immediate and intimate connexions are neither *in* the world, nor *of* the world; I have, therefore, no current to stem. They are all members of religious societies; they discountenance all amusements which are injurious, or purely frivolous; and how, then, can I be exposed to the temptations you so strongly allude to?"

"To live in religious society, if we do not walk close with God. is, I believe, as dangerous a situ-

ation as any in which a young pilgrim can be placed ; for opinion and example (as we said a short time ago, when speaking of Roman Catholics) are apt to have a powerful influence ; and if we see an individual, whose Christian character we highly respect, saying or doing something inconsistent with his profession, we are prone to make light of it, and rather plead it as an excuse for similar conduct in ourselves, than take it as a warning of the frailty and imperfection of all human examples of righteousness. If religious companions were always united in trying to raise the Christian standard, and in keeping one another up to the pursuit of holiness and devotedness, nothing could be more advantageous, or more blessed, than to be locked in such union. Then, if one brother turned a little aside, to the right or to the left, another, instead of following him, would be at hand to warn him with the look of love, or help him back with the readiness of relationship and identity of interest. Then, indeed, would Christian faith, and fellowship, and holy zeal, and heavenly-mindedness grow and abound ; and then would all men know, at a glance, who were the disciples of the Lord Jesus. But as we see things now in a mixed and adulterated state, believe me, my dear Henry, we have much need, in the midst of our best beloved, most esteemed Christian friends, to watch and pray."

"Tell me," said Mr. Leighton, taking up the subject, "tell me, my young friend, do you ever feel at a loss, in your circle at Brighton, to determine re-

specting individuals whether they are decidedly serious or not?"

Henry smiled. "Indeed I do. There are some people of whom I entertain no doubt whatever; but there are others, whose conduct is not so definite. They are serious and frivolous by turns; dress gaily, and talk devoutly; sing hymns, or songs, with almost equal interest and readiness; spend part of their time teaching the Bible to the poor, and part, talking of the fashions to the rich; attend the most instructive and heart-touching ministry; hearing sermons upon subjects of self-denial and crucifying the flesh, which they will take down in short-hand, and, perhaps, make the theme of conversation, yet they will return home to the most luxurious dinners, where every delicacy is provided, and where the price of one dish would, perhaps, procure a substantial meal for ten poor persons."

"I could not entertain a doubt as to such characters," said Theophilus, gravely; "I think they have neither 'lot nor part in the matter.'"

"I would not go quite so far as that, Theophilus," said Mr. Leighton, "for it may be, that some who act in this manner are only weak believers, carried away by the influence of others, and whose consciences may be in a state of sensitiveness, continually reproaching them for living so much beneath their privileges; but I would say, that those who are *happy* and *composed* in such a state, are yet under the dominion of the carnal mind, and want the principle of vital union with Christ, without

which there is no genuine religion. *If any man be in Christ he is a new creature : old things are passed away ; behold, all things are become new.*"*

A summons from the drawing-room, to join the tea-table, interrupted conversation at this juncture ; and the gentlemen rose to adjourn.

It was not without regret that the ladies heard that Henry was so soon to leave them ; and much was said upon the subject during the social meal. When it was nearly over, Mr. Leighton made some allusion to the conversation in which they had been engaged.

"As it is not very interesting to young people to carry on any discussions too far," said he, "I have a mind to read to you an allegory, which I met in some work I was reading a few weeks ago, and which, if I remember right, bears some reference to our subject. Can you tell me, Jane, or Harriet, where we met that little piece, called 'The Jewel of Great Price ; or, the Devices of Satan Unmasked?'"

"I think," said Miss Percy, "it is in the scarce little volume you shewed us some time ago, called 'Stedman's Collection of Fugitive Pieces.'"

"So it is," said Mr. Leighton, rising to examine the bookcase, and after a little time taking down the small volume which he was seeking.

"It is a little sketch of the dangers and temptations held out by an alluring world ; having its baits for every sex, and every age, and its object to gain

possession of the only part of us which is truly valuable, our heaven-born and indestructible souls."

Having found the page, he read as follows; all the young people having gathered about him to hear,

'The Jewel of Great Price; or, Satan's Devices Unmasked:'

"There was once a time, when I was travelling through a beautiful and richly-cultivated country, in which my eye was refreshed, and my taste interested, at every turn of the road. Extensive fields of green pasturage, or tender springing corn, were interspersed with thickly-planted orchards, clustering with blossoms, and promising a rich return to the cultivator; while the back ground of the scenery rose in soft undulations, and green eminences covered with young forest trees; in the extreme distance the prospect assumed a bolder, and more sublime character; a chain of clear blue hills, stretching their beautiful outline over the sky, kept the mind in that state of expectation and interest respecting something yet to be explored, which prevented satiety and stillness while proceeding towards them: and a stream of pure water, issuing from the centre of the chain, flowed on through the fields and valleys where I travelled, causing vegetable life to spring and flourish, wherever it appeared. Strange, however, to say, I saw very few people passing through this road; the one or two whom I saw, seemed to be in a great hurry; and when I asked them were they going on to the blue hills, they smiled, rather scornfully,

and answered, No ; they were going to the *great City*. Hearing this a second and third time, my curiosity overcame my superior taste, and I followed the track of one of these persons, till I came into a very large and splendidly built town, apparently full of inhabitants, and full of activity. As I advanced the crowd became more dense ; and, as every one seemed pressing in one direction, they carried me forward, almost without the power of resistance, till I came into the market-place : there my attention was instantly arrested by a very large shop, or bazaar ; for it extended through a building of considerable magnitude, most splendidly painted and decorated, with goods of every kind for sale, decked out in the most fascinating manner. An immense number of persons, young and old, were assembled here, bartering for whatever articles most suited their taste and fancy. The bazaar was divided into different compartments, to suit various kinds of customers. One division was attended to by a supercilious looking damsel, who held out the greatest allurements and blandishments to the passers-by ; but when she had attracted them sufficiently to make them earnestly desirous of purchasing any of her articles, she then became scornful, and hard to deal with, and raised her prices so exorbitantly, that the purchaser was always left pennyless when her demands were satisfied. The wares she dealt in were sought for chiefly by the sons of Ambition ; and yet, when I looked into them they seemed extremely worthless ; and I wondered how they could have

any attraction for sensible minds; these were—circlets of gold and silver, called coronets; long strings of parchment, covered with names and unintelligible sentences; pieces of colored ribbon, with tinsel ornaments, called garters, and stars; swords, dripping with blood; bottles of smoke, on which were written, popular applause; heaps of a hard substance, that appeared to me neither suitable for food, clothes, or furniture, but which seemed to give the possessor wonderful importance in his own eyes, and those of others. The purchasers of these kinds of merchandize were, generally speaking, elderly persons. I was curious to know why they set such a value on what I esteemed so little.

“‘Oh!’ said one, whom I addressed, ‘when did *you* come to this country? why, you are quite a novice: dont you see the respect it procures me?’

“I turned round and perceived, indeed, that most of the sordid crowd who purchased at this bazaar, paid the deepest reverence and obeisance to every one who had been a successful purchaser of these articles of merchandize. Over the board of this shop was painted a sign—it was an angler taking a fish; the hook sticking in its expiring jaws.

“The next compartment was exceedingly gay and entertaining, attended by a number of women, who seemed hurried and perplexed by the variety of their customers. They had for sale every article for dress or beauty—flowers, feathers, gauzes, ribbons, fair skins, fine hair, blooming complexions,

False shapes, teeth, and eyes; blandishing smiles, traitorous glances, superficial accomplishments. The daughters of Vanity were the purchasers here, notwithstanding the ghastly sign which hung over the door. It was a skeleton; but the owners of the shop had artfully covered it with robes, and concealed the face with a visor, so that few beheld, or knew what it was.

“I then passed on to the next division of the bazaar. It was called, the Temple of Sentiment. Several youths, in classical costume, were here, reciting verses, and striking touching airs upon musical instruments, to seduce the ears of unwary passengers. Here they sold every thing that could gratify intellectual sensuality; all that could pamper the eye or ear of refined taste. Painting, poetry, music; voices to captivate; numbers to entrance; wings to fly over the mountains of Care; light cordials to drive away the pangs of conscience; sweet waters to efface and rub out the bitter memory of sin; and silver trumpets to tell lies, and make profit. I know not what besides, these articles were so numerous. The purchasers were among some of the most interesting and talented of both sexes. My heart was sorry to see them there, but I knew not with what means to dissuade them. The sign over this temple was, a goodly cedar tree, and an axe laid to the root thereof.

“The following division comprehended the bower of Sensuality; and I regretted to see that many who had commenced their career as customers at the bar

of Sentiment, ended here. A sottish old man, called Indulgence, sat in an easy chair, and invited his customers inside, to lounge on a sofa, and look at his wares. The choicest viands, and finest wines, the easiest down beds, the most luxurious satin curtains, impervious to daylight, the newest invented double springs for carriages, and the most obsequious servants were here in abundance. Also, strings of excuses to conscience, for omitted duties; beads, for repeating prayers without any exercise to the mind; pamphlets and newspapers, to make Sabbaths pass with as little devotional labour as need be; plasters, to cover over the wounds of a troublesome memory; and hot irons, to obliterate the remembrance of broken engagements: also, a set of servants, of the family of Flattery, ready for hire, at low wages. A painted swine, wallowing in the mire, hung over the door for a sign.

“A little in the back-ground of these more alluring baits, were a set of buildings called the Shades of Hades. In these were fearful goods set up for sale, and the purchasers were a more reckless set of beings. Here gaming, theft, murder, had its price; but, as I did not even look into those dens, I cannot say much on the subject. Nevertheless, I could perceive that the owner of this great bazaar did not seem to think that place more for his profit, in the kind of barter he most prized, than the others. I observed this personage, with an embroidered serpent on his vest, very busy and diligent persuading people to buy, and standing at every

one's elbow. I became curious to know the coin of this country, and found many people willing enough to show it to me. It did not seem to be greatly esteemed, for the owner of the bazaar, when he sold any thing much wished for, always required a valuable jewel, which I perceived every one had hung round his neck. It was set in a gold case, and, I was told, was indestructible in its nature. The owner of the bazaar seemed to spend his whole time in gathering up heaps of this jewel; yet he carefully kept the possessors from knowing its value, and often persuaded them to part with it for a trifle. Some people seemed to think lightly enough of it; they would give it for an idle word or a song. Others struggled long, and sometimes left the tempting stall, and returned again, undecided how to act. While a few, balancing its value against the object of barter, turned their back to the tempter, and would not yield to his solicitation. I then thought of the words, *'what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and LOSE HIS OWN SOUL, or what shall he give in exchange for his soul?'**

"While I was musing upon these scenes, methought I saw a personage wandering up and down among the crowd, with an air of more than ordinary interest and anxiety. He had a mild and lovely countenance; a manner full of grace; and seemed totally unmoved by all the attractions displayed in the bazaar. On inquiring why the people in the shops did not try to induce him to patronize their

* Matt. xvi. 26.

wares, I was told he had been tried with the very strongest allurements they possessed, and all had been unavailing. The object and occupation of this sublime person seemed to be, to try and dissuade as many of the passengers as possible from purchasing at the bazaar; pointing, from time to time, at the beautiful range of hills beyond the *great city*, and telling them of a rich and enduring estate there, to be inherited, if they only took the pains to travel the road that led thither. I perceived he spared no trouble to give them a description of their way, and offered to bear their charges; but many, alas! turned from his kind words, and preferred the fleeting enjoyments they had now in possession, to any prospects, however brilliant, of the future. There was another act of kindness performed by this true friend, which I cannot help recording; he had observed how slight a value most of the crowd set upon the inestimable jewel they carried in their breasts, and how anxious the Tempter with the serpent embroidered on his vest seemed to be to gain possession of it; which he often did with little difficulty; sometimes he gained it by craft, sometimes by surprise, and sometimes with the knowledge and full consent of the owner. The friendly personage I have named took infinite pains to persuade the people of their folly and madness in parting with it, and showed them that as the tempter had no power whatever over *him*, or whatever *he* took in charge, their safest way would be, to intrust their jewels to his safe-keeping. He told them he would,

in that case, convey them and their treasure to the celestial country, where no tempter could ever assail them, and where no interruption would ever cloud their happiness. He said he would even redeem those already pledged to their enemy, on the same conditions; as all power was given to him in heaven and in earth.* And I saw he was able to make good his promise, for whenever he demanded one of the precious jewels, it was instantly surrendered; the reason was, he had already paid an infinite price for it.†

“Many, many slighted his kindness, and rejected his offers of love. After a while these disappeared, and I saw them no more; and they were conveyed to the valley of darkness, and thence, to the kingdom of the prince of the bottomless pit: but their places were supplied by a new generation, and the same scenes were reacted again. A few, alas! that they were but *few*, believed and accepted the offer of Him who showed so tender an interest in their welfare: and I observed, that as soon as ever they had committed the precious gem, in which their wealth consisted, to his keeping, a revolution seemed to take place in their appearance and manners. They no longer seemed attracted by the bright trifles in the bazaar; they closed their eyes to the scenes displayed by Vanity; their ears to the sounds of sensual delight. They walked rapidly past the bower of Indulgence, not venturing to delay there

* Matt. xxviii. 18.

† 1 Pet. i. 18, 19.

for a moment; and whenever they caught a glance of him with the embroidered serpent, they turned from him with dread and disgust, and instantly sought the side of their benevolent Friend and protector. Strange to say, methought that those who kept much company with him grew very like him: their countenances attained a degree of the same mild and dignified composure; their garments assumed a similar fashion to his, and their employment became of the same kind; I saw them moving busily about in his steps, warning and advising all their neighbours and friends to take heed of him who was anxious to destroy their souls, and to close in, at once, with the divine offers of love and compassion which were now sounding in their ears. Often I heard the words repeated, 'Behold now is the accepted time, *now* is the day of salvation.*' Many were won by these persuasions; and the zeal of those who pleaded the cause of their friend and master was sometimes so great as to carry them into the very centre of the bazaar-stalls, to drag forth, by force, those who were beginning to surrender themselves up to its enchantments. Some were rescued from *every one* of those several places of resort. Some, who had even gone into the dark dens of iniquity, in the back ground, were drawn forth by the loving persuasions, or fearful warnings of their truly faithful friends. The message of mercy was sounded every where throughout the

* 2 Cor. vi. 2.

great bazaar; but every where I observed had more success than in the bower of *Sensual Indulgence*. Here the enemy had his strong hold, for few people suspected the dangers of the place: they were apt to saunter in unconsciously, and take a seat in an easy chair: this was so constructed, that once a person was seated, it was extremely difficult to rise; and the lazy and luxurious seldom took the trouble to do so. To remain in it, the friend of the pilgrims assured them, was immediate loss of health, and finally, sure destruction. He advised all his followers to avoid making it a resting-place, even for a moment; and said, if any man would come after him, he must deny himself with heroic resolution such refreshments as these, and seek his repose and his pleasures in very different quarters.

“Now, while I looked at these things, I felt sorrowful, for I saw how hard it was for man to withstand so many allurements, and I wept at the numbers that were bartering their souls for toys of no value. And while I was musing, the most delightful strains of music broke upon my ear, such as I had never heard before, and such as made me think I was already in the New Jerusalem. No words, however, accompanied the music; it was just an assemblage of melting harmonic tones, which swelled in the air, and then died away in such touching cadences that my whole frame seemed entranced and swelling with exquisite emotion. While under this excitement, the fairest of nature’s scenes seemed to burst upon my view in all the

warmth of a glowing sunset; broad meads and sunny uplands, rich embowering forest-trees, in all the expanded beauty and varied forms that untired nature can bestow; rivers of majestic breadth, sparkling with silver billows, and fringed with loveliest shrubs and flowers, the whole crowned with distant hills, wreathed with fleecy clouds of roseate hue, and reflecting all the radiant tints of descending daylight. Methought I beheld the fairest of the kingdoms of this world in all its glory, and while my eye and ear were thus lost in rapture, I felt a slight pain in my breast, and looking downward, perceived a little black hook had been fastened to the gem which I, in common with others, possessed, and that the tempter had devised a plan to throw me off my guard while he took the first step to effect his fearful purpose. The danger of my condition instantly rushed upon my view, and, uttering a shriek of terror, I put one hand over my eyes, and clasped the other upon my treasure. Looking up again, the vision of beauty had disappeared; the sweet melody had died away; I was in the midst of the crowd of the bazaar. I was terrified at the risk I had gone through, and determined instantly to go and commit my jewel to the charge of Him who alone could keep it safely. At first I could not find him; he seemed to have withdrawn himself from the crowd for a season. I went up and down mourning after him; and now, for the first time, felt I never should have peace or comfort till I found him. I did not care for any thing in the

bazaar ; I felt for nothing but the value of my soul ; I could not extricate it myself from the little hook that the tempter had fastened in it ; and I wept and mourned many days. At last, one of those who resembled his master came to me and said, ‘ Whom seekest thou ? ’ and when I told him, without raising my eyes, or looking at him, he took me kindly by the hand, and answered, ‘ I that speak unto thee am he.’* Then I looked, and saw his feet that they had been pierced, and the hand that held me had been pierced ; and he opened his garment and showed me a wound in his side : I could not doubt that it was he who had been wounded for my sins, and had paid the price for my redemption ; and I fell at his feet and worshipped ; but he raised me in his arms, and embraced me ; and the gem he plucked from my bosom, and put it into his own ; and at the same moment a most unspeakable serenity passed over my whole spirit ; I felt my beloved was mine, and I was his, and that his love and power would protect me from the enemy for ever. The impression was so sweet and so powerful that I awoke and found it a dream.”

“ Is that all, papa ? ” said little Jane.

“ Yes, love ; it is all. I hope you understood its meaning.”

“ I think I did, papa. It means that there is no place safe for our souls but in the keeping of the Lord Jesus ; that we must not love the world, nor

* John, ix. 26.

look at its vain show, because the devil makes use of all its deceits to beguile the souls of men into his power. But, papa, what harm was the poor man doing when he was only listening to sweet music, and looking at a beautiful view, that the devil should have got such power over him *then* ?”

“He was off his guard, Jane. The Christian pilgrim must be

‘ For ever standing on his guard,
And watching unto prayer.’

“No matter what he is doing, however apparently *innocent*, if he is forgetful of heaven ; if he is ceasing to live by faith on the Lord Jesus. You can hardly understand me yet, Jane, but I hope you will hereafter, when I say that the life of faith is that of the Christian. The life of sense that of the worldling. We must endeavour to cultivate the one and subdue the other in ourselves, or we shall never be holy or happy disciples.”

Henry was silent after the reading of this allegory, and seemed absorbed in his own thoughts; whether arising from reflections upon his change of circumstances, or the subjects that evening presented to his mind, could not be ascertained, as he did not converse further, even with his friend Theophilus. He retired early that evening to his chamber, and the next day made preparations for leaving the rectory. He pressed Theophilus to accompany him to town, but as this was quite impossible at the

time, he was obliged to part from him with much regret.

The whole family united in requesting Henry to return to them whenever he found it convenient to do so ; and they all presented him with some little memorial of affectionate remembrance : but what struck him most was, the manner in which they made him the subject of special supplication, in family worship, the morning of his departure ; the heartfelt language in which his spiritual concerns were pleaded, and the strong faith exercised, that he might be endowed with grace and power from on high, to resist all the snares of the world, the flesh, and the devil. Henry was affected, even to tears, at these proofs of Christian love, and, wringing the hand of each, he hurried away on his journey.

CHAPTER IX.

Why seek ye the living below,
Where death has established his throne?
Can the ardors of seraphim glow
In hearts of insensible stone?
His hope shall be crush'd in its birth
Who labours to kindle a fire,
That shrouded by vapours of earth,
But sparkles a while to expire.

ANON.

THEOPHILUS had entreated Henry to write to him very frequently, after he went away; a promise which the latter made willingly, as he was much attached to his friend, and felt great confidence in him.

The first few letters contained nothing to excite either particular anxiety or much satisfaction. They were descriptive of the persons and scenes in which Henry now acted. His friends, as he truly said, were, for the most part, serious; but these were

wedding times, and Theophilus knew that some allowance must be made for the extra disturbance which takes place, even in religious families, on these occasions. There is a temptation to see company, to purchase finery, to display equipage, which is, upon the whole, unfavourable to the Christian temper; and those who pass through such scenes often feel it difficult to keep the thoughts stayed, and the deportment calm, unembarrassed, and recollected.

The family of Villeroi were of a lively and sociable temperament; they saw much company, and were fond of excitements; hence, Henry's letters abounded with description, sometimes of a delightful sail, and pic-nic party; sometimes of a distant excursion, to see some celebrated place; sometimes of a musical entertainment; and sometimes of a sermon, preached by some noted minister; but all, equally, as subjects of amusement. Henry, however, often adverted to the days he had passed at Lilybrook, and the conversations he had had with his friend; and his letters frequently concluded with a fervent request to be remembered in their prayers; adding, that nothing gave his mind so much confidence or support as the idea that he had prayer continually offered up for him.

In his replies, Theophilus used to point out how needful it was, not to trust too much to the aid of others; that religion is an individual possession, and cannot be transferred: the friends of the man sick of the palsy could do no more for him than bring

him to the foot of the Lord. It was then for him to exercise faith, and thus receive the blessing; and so, he argued, must you, dear Henry, plead your own cause at the throne of grace, or our best efforts will avail you nothing.

In the course of two or three weeks Louisa Villeroi was married, and accompanied her husband to London. Henry was invited to be of the party, and as he was much attached to his sister, he complied. After he had removed thither, his circle of society became more enlarged, and more of a mixed character. His sister was obliged to see numerous companies of her husband's relatives, many of them very worldly people; and to accommodate them in some measure, Mr. Vincent enlarged his style of entertainment, and permitted the introduction of several plans into his establishment, which were not very consistent with the comfort or consistency of a Christian family. In consequence of the numerous visitors who frequented the house, to whom such a custom would not have been acceptable, family prayer was often omitted in the evening. Dancing, or cards, were not introduced, but much frivolous singing was sanctioned, and foolish talking and jesting allowed. The religious ladies who came to these parties did not like to be remarked for any singularity in appearance; their dress was, therefore, as varied and fashionable as those of others; and their manners did not, in other respects, distinguish them. Yet, if any one of them were addressed in a tête-à-tête upon serious topics, she would probably speak very

fluently, very wisely, very instructively. Henry was much puzzled by these characters; they were more of a mixed kind than any he had ever seen before: he consulted his sister, and she only answered with a sigh, that she felt there was something wrong, something inconsistent in the whole system; but she could not tell what to do, or how to get out of it.

"You know, Henry," said she, "they tell me I must do so and so; for Mrs. Such-a-one, who is a great deal older and more experienced than I am, does it; and that as I am so young, and so lately married, it would be considered a very presumptuous thing in me, to break through other people's customs, and lead a new fashion. I know Vincent is uncomfortable also, but he is afraid of offending his connections."

"Well, then," said Henry, "I think I will write all about it to Leighton. He is a fine clear-headed fellow on all these subjects, and I am sure will show us what is right."

The contents of Henry's letter will be easily gathered from the following, which is an extract from the reply:

"Lilybrook, Nov. 182-.

"MY DEAR FRIEND—You have written to me upon a very serious subject, and I have laid it much to heart, praying for Divine direction, that I may be enabled not to speak mine own words, but such as may be dictated by wisdom from above, to help us both in the discovery of that narrow path, in

which all must walk who aim at eternal life. We are too apt to take human examples for our models, finding them much easier to imitate than the only perfect *One*, in the New Testament; and it is, therefore, highly necessary for us, when we feel such an inclination, to examine whether we are not in danger of departing from the pure rule of the Divine Law.

“The features of society have been undergoing a very considerable change during the last few years. The religion of the Lord Jesus Christ has been rapidly and universally diffusing itself; the progress of the Gospel in foreign countries, and the exertions of its friends at home, having become daily more extensive and effectual. The missionary spirit, formerly confined to the breasts of a few pious and talented individuals, has now extended throughout the country, and stirs up to action many who, from their sex, or age, or deficiency in encouragement, thought heretofore they had no part assigned them in the labor of love. The time is also past in which piety was a rare and solitary possession, exposing the believer to unkindness and scorn from intimate relations and friends. It is put to no such trial now; for in many families, every individual is more or less under the influence of divine grace; they are like clusters of precious gems, which, uniting their rays with others from every denomination and party, into one shining focus, now use their common strength and fervour for the diffusion of light, heat, and knowledge, to the uttermost parts of the earth. These are fea-

tures in the present aspect of the Christian world, which must truly delight every one that is interested in the kingdom of his Saviour, and longs for the promise of his coming. But there is also an evil arising from it, which cannot be too earnestly guarded against. The many noble and wise who have embraced the religion of Christ have rendered its profession respectable, and caused persecution to lay down its weapons; and, as a foreign weed, that once had been trampled on and scorned, is praised for its luxuriance and beauty, if seen in the conservatories of the great, so may the present extensiveness of religious profession arise in part from its connection with noble or respectable circles. It is, therefore, to be feared that many who do not know the real restrictions of the system in which they are so ready to engage, are in danger of making the discovery when too late; and then of attempting to bring down those restrictions to a level less painful and mortifying to unrenewed nature. These are a class of persons who love the world they affect to despise, and hate the religion they affect to admire. They attempt to join two characters which cannot, which ought not to coalesce; for genuine Christianity is as uncongenial to the spirit of the world, as oil to a mixture with water.

“ I am, therefore, by no means surprised at the distress of mind you feel, and your anxiety to know how far you may make the example of others a precedent for your own conduct, since you have mentioned to me the circumstances of the society in

which you are placed. It appears that you are afraid to differ with them in points of opinion and practice, in many cases where the convictions of your conscience and light derived from the Scriptures leaves you in doubt whether their standard be correct; and this fear arises from your esteem for those characters who are held up to you as models for imitation, their conduct in life being irreproachable, and their external religious duties regularly fulfilled. But the characteristics you mention I will treat of generally, for they belong to many individuals of the same class. On the one hand, they have family prayer frequently in their houses; attend regularly upon the ministry of a pious and eminent clergyman; converse with feeling and eloquence on what they hear; purchase and read many of the best religious publications; and if they do not themselves take an active part in the institutions, either for benevolent purposes or the promulgation of Christian knowledge, they at least subscribe to them, and appear interested in their success. Many are eminent for giving with liberality to private and distressed individuals; and perhaps some go so far as to recommend and distribute Testaments and tracts. These are truly all circumstances connected with the true Christian character; but they are not the whole: a tree may appear very lovely if covered with verdant leaves, and yet be comparatively worthless if without the fruit.

But these individuals have also another world, with which they must keep on good terms. They mix moderately among the ungodly as well as the

religious, and are always contriving plausible reasons to justify themselves with one party, for the steps they have been led to take, while under the influence of the other. Such persons avoid the open scandal of frequenting theatres or ball-rooms, but they have no scruple in attending dress parties, where vanity and frivolity are the leading features of the entertainment. They will subscribe to concerts where *sacred* music is performed, in which the name of the Most High is avowedly taken in vain ; for no devotion is pretended on these occasions, though the language of Scripture and prayer is the theme. They will lay aside a few guineas annually, for religious purposes, but will, perhaps, appropriate hundreds to selfish gratification. They will argue with you upon the necessity of keeping up rank and station in society, and of avoiding too much singularity, to excuse their indulgence of pride and extravagance. They will teach their children to pray and read the Scriptures ; but they will allow them to regard these duties in the light of ordinary lessons, in which there is little interest ; while the main object of their education is, to fit them to shine in the world, and to make them regard *it* as their *home*, instead of their place of *banishment*. Such Christians as these, are always pleading for *rational* religion, and blaming as enthusiasts and fools, those who are led by the Spirit of God to see, that every compromise with the world is sinful and dangerous.

“ Some of these persons, especially the *indolent*, are apt to be loud in their censure of those who

take an active part in public institutions, and who devote any portion of their time to the gratuitous instruction of the ignorant poor; they are *certain* such things cannot be done without a neglect of home duties, and therefore they undertake nothing of the kind. The real reason which they conceal under such a plausible pretence is, their dread of the cross. They will have to make an effort, or a sacrifice of some kind or other. They will have to rise early to gain more time, or retrench some superfluity to afford more money; and for this they have not inclination; and they find it easier to make objections against their more active neighbours, than to imitate their Christian zeal.

“I am not going to say that *your* friends are so deeply involved in a worldly spirit, as the characters I have just described; but sure I am, that there is amongst them, a strong tendency to fall into this low and carnalized form of Christian profession. It is in fact, a desire to do no less than to change the aspect of the path which our Lord pointed out, as the only one to heaven—to render it no longer strait, by breaking down its hedges; no longer steep, by levelling its laborious ascents: or in other words, to make unnecessary for the attainment of eternal life, that condition, which our Lord pronounced as indispensable, namely, that of *denying self, taking up the cross, and following Him*.

“The young man mentioned in the Gospel, as an inquirer, what he should do to inherit eternal life, would not have gone away sorrowful, had this great

point been attainable, consistent with the enjoyment of his rich possessions, his worldly spirit, his value for the esteem and respect of men. He could not do both ; they were totally incompatible with one another ; and he made his choice, preferring the things of time, to those of eternity. Such were the feelings, and decisive actions of men, in the earlier times of the promulgation of Christianity. No plan of sophistical deception had then been devised to satisfy the mind, that all was right, and that heaven was secure, until all had been forsaken ; and the cross which the Lord Jesus had assumed for sinners, was taken up and borne by *them*, that they might follow *his footsteps*. No one, then, expected to share the glorious revelations of Tabor, who were not willing to weep with him, in the crimson-stained and sorrowful paths of Gethsemane.

✓ This, then, appears to me, to be the grand criterion whereby to distinguish spurious, from true religion, through its plausible exterior. Inquire and examine, is it a religion of self-denial, a religion of the cross ? or is it one that accommodates itself to the prevailing tastes of the day, allowing the flesh every indulgence, consistent with a certain degree of outward decorum, and propriety ; allowing the affections to grow wild and unmortified, the temper to reign unsubdued, the tongue to possess a free license ; pride to assume, though perhaps under a different and more specious form, its own gratifying distinctions ; vanity to indulge its tastes for finery, equipage, and expense ? Some, or perhaps *all* these evils more or less domi-

nant in individuals, who complacently call themselves by the name of the Lord's disciples.

✓ But in those actions which appear *connected* with the Christian character, let us examine if they will bear the test of revealed truth. Is it evident that they issue from a sincere desire of the approbation of God? Is His glory and His service the only object in view? Is the common business of life, conducted in that spirit which the apostle points out, when he says: 'Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God?' Where there is an opposition of circumstances in which the interests of religion, if embraced, promises difficulty and perhaps disgrace—are they preferred? Or is the mind easily satisfied in pursuing the contrary course, by considerations of worldly advantage? Alas! alas, I fear much, that such inquiries as these would detect many counterfeits, for the promises are only to those who seek the Lord with the *whole heart*, and we must be content 'to give up much, and to suffer much, if heaven is the prize we seek for.' I do not wish, by these observations, to render you severely critical, or to set you upon the watch to detect the faults of others. No, my dear friend, but I wish to lead you to watch, and to 'judge yourself, that you be not judged of the Lord.' Search into your own motives, and oh! be not a half-hearted Christian, but holdly take up the cross, and tread in the footsteps of your divine Master. Go into no society, undertake no work, in which you think his presence, if now realized upon earth,

would not accompany you ; and shrink at no difficulty, where his word, either in the letter, or the spirit, points out the path of duty. Though there are not direct commands, relative to our conduct in every circumstance, in which we may be placed, yet the spirit of Scripture applies to all cases ; therefore, read much, and read with prayer, and you need not be afraid but that your path will be as the shining light, shining more and more unto the perfect day."

For a considerable time after sending this letter, Leighton heard nothing more from Henry ; he wrote again once or twice, and receiving no answer, began to be seriously uneasy ; he mentioned his doubts and fears to his father, who fully sympathized with them ; and after some consideration, agreed, that as Theophilus had a little business in London, it might be as well for him to go there now, and make it an apology for looking after Henry : they both feared he had fallen more or less into the snares of the world, and that the altered state of his feelings made him unwilling to communicate with his Christian friends. On Leighton's arrival in town, he merely stopped to change his dress before he proceeded to the residence of Mr. Vincent. It was a fine house in Upper Brooke-street, newly furnished in the best and most admired manner, and two footmen in waiting ushered him up stairs. Henry was at home, and lounging on a sofa in the saloon ; a draught-board was on the table opposite, and a fashionable looking young man, who appeared to have been playing with him at the

game, had thrown himself carelessly into an indulging chair, just as Leighton was announced. Henry started on his feet at the name, the blood rushed into his face, and he stood quite still, while his friend came forward, extending the cordial hand; Henry gave his, but with less ardor than was natural to him. "So, Leighton, this is kind; when did you come? I am much surprised at seeing you." "I had business in London," answered Theophilus, "and as it is a long time since I heard of you, I made no delay in coming hither immediately; I thought perhaps you were ill; were you not lying on that sofa?" Henry colored again, "I believe I was, but only through idleness, I am very well."

"I rejoice to hear it; but tell me then, why you never answered my letters? One, two, three—I don't know how many; and you were formerly such an excellent correspondent."

"Really, Theophilus, I must plead guilty; I know I ought to have written to you, but I have been so engaged"—"At study?" said Leighton laughing. Henry looked hurt, and Leighton felt sorry at having hazarded a jest; knowing as he did, that Henry had not been, in the slightest degree, paying attention to study for many months.

"Study!" said the young man in the easy chair, whom Henry had introduced as a Mr. Penruddock, "What a bore!"

"No, not at study Theophilus; but my sister has many friends; we live in a large circle of society,

and I find very little time either for reading or writing: even my mother's last letter, dated three weeks ago, I have not yet answered."

"I should feel it a great inconvenience," returned Leighton, "to have all my time so completely occupied by others, that I had no retired moment to call my own, and enjoy a little solitude."

"*Solitude*," said Mr. Penruddock, repeating a favorite phrase, "what a bore!—I dont know anything so disagreeable as to be alone for five minutes; I should die of ennui. But I take care never to be without company of some sort; it was on account of my friend here, who said he had a head-ache, and would not come out, that I stopped this last hour. I could not have the barbarity to desert him. But apropos, Villeroi, of your head-ache, I dont wonder you are subject to it, you lead such a doleful life. Oh! if you had been at the opera last night, and seen Madame L——, it would have given you spirits for a month."

Henry did not seem to know much about the opera or its enchantments; but Penruddock went on to mention other names and other scenes, with which he seemed more familiar; and on which Leighton knew he could not converse so fluently, if he had not seen or heard more on the subject, than would be possible if he only mixed in religious society.

The young men went on to discuss manners and fashions; the comparative merits of different public singers; the beauties and defects of a new fashionable novel. Penruddock did not mention the opera again,

nor talk of the stage, nor of professed actresses; he kept within certain limits, for he knew Henry was not prepared to give up at once all his prejudices of education and habit; but Leighton, perceived with grief, that the downward path was smoothing and making level for him, and that there was scarcely a step between his present state of mind, and that of a complete departure of the heart from God. At first, Henry seemed shy and embarrassed by Leighton's presence, but after a little while this wore off, and he spoke with great volubility and apparent interest on the subjects introduced by his other acquaintance. Theophilus was determined to out-sit the latter, and evidently to the annoyance of both parties, he remained so long that Penruddock was forced to take his leave.

When he was gone, Henry seemed determined to avoid all serious investigations, which he saw Leighton was intending to make; and turning round to him with a gay air said—"Well, my dear fellow, tell me now, how are all my friends at the rectory? your father and mother, my aunt Percy, and Jessie, and Jane, and all the little ones; and how is my old friend at the infirmary, the Irishman, Pat Finegan?"

"I am glad to see you do not forget any of them, we feared you did, but we do not forget *you*."

"Oh! you know I am a true-hearted fellow, and if I was not to see you all for fifty years, you would just find me the same as when we parted."

"I am not sure of that."

"Why so?" asked Henry.

"Because you are changed, much changed, in a very few months."

"Not to *you* surely; you do not doubt that my regard and esteem is unabated?"

"Perhaps not; but your pleasure in my society is. Acknowledge, dear Henry, that you feel greater ease in the company of your new associates, than you do in mine?"

"I'm not fond of being catechised," answered Henry pettishly, shrugging his shoulders; but resuming his affected gaiety of manners, he continued—"Oh! you think now, Leighton, that all this company and excitement I have been in, has done me harm and injured my religious feelings?—I assure you to the contrary; I am just as well able to pray after a pleasant lively evening with my friends, as if I had been moping in solitude all day; and then if I am too sleepy to read a chapter, I make up for it on Sunday, and generally read a dozen or two on that day, to atone for the week's deficiencies."

"That is like a practice in a certain church with which you would not like to be identified," said Leighton. "Do you think that an account is kept for you in heaven, of all your omissions of duty, for you to wipe away at the end of the week by a little extra trouble? and that the mere reading of those words, which were intended to be the nourishment of your soul and guide of your path during the six days preceding, can answer all these purposes on the Sabbath day? As well might you expect health by

starving your body all the rest of your time, and eating seven meals at once on Sunday."

Henry laughed—"You are always severe, but I can take anything from *you*, as I know you mean well."

Leighton looked at him earnestly; for his style of speaking was very different from what it had been: and he saw it would be extremely difficult to bring any thing home to him, so as to make his interview of the least use. To irritate by questioning or appearing to dictate like a teacher, he also knew, would be a very injurious mode of proceeding, and would probably make him shun all future intercourse; accordingly, he varied the subject for a while, and talked on different matters with considerable skill; till at length Henry became more at his ease, and had resumed his natural manners. In an indirect way, Leighton adverted to theatrical entertainments.

"I do not *frequent* the theatre—nor go to balls—nor play games of hazard—nor do any of those things that would alarm you," said Henry; "I know you want to discover these secrets of my life, though you don't tell me so; and I have such a regard for you, my worthy friend, that I want to set your mind at ease; though I doubt if I should have satisfied you if you had cross-questioned me."

But Leighton did not look at all relieved—"Come now, I won't be ill-humoured with you; you may ask me what questions you like," said Henry, resuming again; "but I do not promise to answer them, except I choose it."

"Then Henry, my friend, I will avail myself of your permission, and ask why you do *not* go to balls theatres, and card parties?"

Henry looked embarrassed—"Indeed I am not sure of my reasons; to tell the truth, I don't think it would be in any degree a greater evil to spend my time there than in the way I do now. I will freely confess that though I do not *frequent* such scenes, I have been at a ball, and twice at the theatre, and enjoyed both excessively. I have very little time for thinking seriously here at home, and I might just as well be there; and really, I met many of the same people, not much gayer or less religious than those I talk to every day."

"Then, why don't you go again?"

"Ah! Leighton, you are not serious—why, what would every one say of me and of my father's son, if I was just to become a mere man of the world, like young Penruddock, for instance? Why, no religious people that I know of, go to the theatre; and it would be soon circulated among our circle at home, that I was quite a reprobate, and gone over to the enemy's camp. No, no, Leighton, I hope I am not come to that yet."

"But you acknowledge if you did, it would make very little difference in your present state of mind."

"No difference I think; and, to be candid, Leighton, I really cannot understand why these amusements are represented in such a terrific manner, quite made bug-bears. I confess I do not see so much evil in them."

✓ "That is because your state of mind is congenial; and it would be as difficult for a person in such circumstances to detect evil, as for one sitting in twilight to pronounce upon shades of colour. But, Henry, do you think that those pursuits and pleasures are for the glory of God? Do they honour him? Do they promote his cause? Do they excite holy thoughts? Do they make death appear desirable? No, no; in your inmost soul you must acknowledge it is far otherwise; and, therefore, whatever the world may think of them, or reason as to their innocence, they are unworthy of a child of God. He who is resolved to possess heaven hereafter, must not make earth his resting place. He has other work to do, and work which is sufficient to occupy all his powers of body and soul. To say the least of it, therefore, every pursuit which has not God for its object, and eternity for its end, is idle in the extreme, and a puerile waste of immortal faculties. Besides, Henry, remember the danger incurred. You recollect the allegory read to us by my father. It was under the most innocent excitements ~~that~~ Satan fixed his hook in the unwatchful soul."

Henry shuddered.

Leighton resumed—"Those only, therefore, are *safe and blessed*, who have not *walked in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stood in the way of sinners, nor sat in the seat of the scornful.*"

Conversation was here interrupted, by the entrance of Mr. and Mrs. Vincent. The latter came forward with the greatest joy when she saw Theophilus—

introduced him to her husband as a very particular and highly esteemed friend of the family, and expressed herself in the warmest terms of kindness and pleasure. Mr. Vincent asked him to dine the next day, as he expected a small party. This invitation would have been declined, if Leighton had not felt an anxiety to see more about Henry, and to observe the kind of temptations which had wrought such a change in him. He also felt an interest in the characters of Mr. and Mrs. Vincent, both of whom, he knew, were under a certain influence of religious principle, but were too undecided in their conduct to adorn their profession, or give the least aid, as examples, to other Christians. Mr. Vincent had a good figure, a very pleasing countenance, and a well-shaped head; but had Leighton been a phrenologist, he might have thought there was too large a development of the love of approbation, with deficient firmness; much veneration and benevolence, with a fulness of the organs of visible quality; while the reflective faculties were of very moderate size. To this external configuration, his character corresponded. He was remarkably amiable and kind in disposition, and always solicitous to please, but infirm of purpose; incapable of deliberating wisely, or acting decisively. He had considerable taste in matters which affect the outward sense; hence he enjoyed scenery and sounds, and his house displayed all the beauty and magnificence of wealth, laid out with discriminating effect; and abounded in instruments of music. His books partook of the same taste.

They were mostly of the depictive kind; light and elegant literature, illustrated with the finest engravings, and adorned with superb bindings; and even the religious works, of which he had no small stock, were more of an entertaining than solid description. The reader might look in vain for Owen, or Boston, or Baxter, or Sibbes; but he would find much to amuse a modern divinity student in the more attractive volumes of religious fiction. Not that these works should be undervalued; they have all had their use; and are admirably adapted, as means of interesting persons, through the alluring medium of narrative or fiction, to think upon subjects which, in a more serious form, might never have engaged their attention: but the Christian who confines his studies to these, and never goes farther, remains generally a babe in experience, and seldom enters into the enjoyment of that mature state, and of the exalted privileges which belong to those, who have cultivated their minds with severer discipline.

Leighton did not remain long after the entrance of Henry's relatives, but promising to wait upon them at dinner the next day, he arose and took his leave. It was with a heavy heart he retired to his hotel; for what he had seen had confirmed his worst fears, and he did not know how his friend could be extricated: he felt so completely cast down and bewildered, that he came, at length, to the conclusion, there was no other way but to spread the case before the Lord, like good king Hezekiah of old. With the deepest fervour of spirit did he plead for Henry that night: he *implored* the Lord in mercy and love, to arrest him

before he departed farther from his ways, and that he would open some path for his escape from the perils which surrounded him. He pleaded the love of the good Shepherd for the lambs of his fold, and entreated him to interpose for his name's sake, and fetch back the one that was going astray. Leighton felt (as all who are in Christ must feel) an identity with the spirit of his Master in this yearning over an immortal soul. The spirit of Jesus was dictating his prayer.—It was sympathizing in union ;—it was preparing an answer of peace. Nor did he rise from his knees till he was enabled to believe, that the Lord had undertaken the cause, and would deliver his beloved friend from the fangs of the pitiless destroyer.

The next day, Theophilus went to Upper Brookstreet, about dinner hour. The saloon was empty ; and, on inquiring for Mr. Villeroi, he was told that he was in his room, dressing. There *was* a time when Leighton would have immediately gone to seek him, but he felt it must be otherwise now ; and, with a sigh, he sat down to entertain himself with a book, till company should arrive. Mrs. Vincent was the first who entered, and, after the usual salutations had passed, she said that they expected only a few select friends to-day ; that she would not have asked him, if it had been a very large party, for she knew his habits were so strict, that he would not enjoy himself. Leighton thought this was an admission that something was wrong ; but he made no remark, being, indeed, at a loss what to say.

Dr. Harewood was now announced. His name was quite familiar to Leighton, as a fashionable preacher in the west end of the town. He was a lively, animated looking little man, full of anecdote and amusing conversation; often saying a witty thing, sometimes condescending even to pun, but seldom making a remark tending to edification; indeed, few would have suspected the sacred nature of his office, except for an occasional professional allusion. Immediately after him, arrived a Mr. and Mrs. Palmer: the former a sensible looking man, but with rather a severe expression of countenance. The lady seemed, in the eyes of Leighton, too highly dressed for the character of her profession; but as there was nothing in her appearance to offend scrupulous delicacy, he did not feel inclined to judge harshly. Mr. Vincent now entered, introducing a friend of his, Mr. Kerr, a Scotch gentleman of some literary note. He was a tall, strong-built man, with great breadth of shoulder, and large features; a high expansive forehead, dark penetrating eyes, and considerable depth of expression. Altogether, his externals denoted much intellectual as well as physical strength, and the company seemed, in general, to expect gratification from his society. After him came a Mr. Arlington, a venerable looking minister, from whose prepossessing countenance Leighton augured most favourably of the character within. He felt an instinctive sympathy with him, and secretly hoped to find a kindred spirit. Henry did not make his appearance till the same time with

Major and Mrs. Bloomfield, who were the last that arrived. Mrs. Bloomfield was sister to Mr. Vincent, and made no profession whatever of religion. Her husband was a man of the world, and his air and manner conveyed no false impression. He was finished in all the elegance and polish of fashionable society, and affected nothing which did not belong to such a character. Yet, his gentleman-like feelings made him willing to allow for the opinions of all who differed with him. He did not care for religion or religious people; but he was too polite ever to show them contempt, or disrespect. He never would dispute or argue, but had a skilful way of waiving every serious discussion, by some polite, unmeaning assent, or by turning the point of the subject unawares; hence it was not only extremely difficult to have a profitable conversation with himself, but even to carry it on in his presence. Leighton perceived this before he was long in his society; but seeing there were many of the party *intellectual*, at least, if not decidedly religious, he hoped the evening would not pass altogether in unprofitable intercourse. At dinner he was seated next to Mrs. Vincent, and opposite Mr. Arlington. The latter gentleman addressed some interesting observation to Mr. Palmer, to which the other attempted to reply; but the fish and soup of the first course so occupied every one's attention, and gave so much to do, that the subject dropped; and a few insignificant remarks on indifferent matters of news and gossip, were all that passed. When the second course was laid on

the table, Mr. Arlington attempted to resume, and Mr. Kerr to support the conversation ; but again in vain. This scene was still more busy than the former ; such choosing and refusing, and helping and recommending of different dishes ; mutual invitations to drink wine ; champagne going its rounds, and all the other etceteras of a dinner, interrupted the speakers so often, that nothing satisfactory could be heard.*

The third course did not improve the matter much, the heat of the apartment, and the effect of convivial refreshment, had raised the spirits and loosed the tongues of some of the rest of the party, who had been hitherto silent ; they began to gossip, each person to the one who sat nearest ; and the confusion of sounds was so great, that no general topic could possibly have been discussed. Leighton feeling there was

* There are so great and pregnant evidences of the prevalence of an earthly, worldly frame of spirit, in many who make profession of religion, that it is high time they were called to a due consideration, how opposite they are therein to the power and spirituality of that religion which they profess. There is no way whereby such a frame is evinced to prevail in many ; yea, in the generality of such professors, that is not manifest unto all. In their habits, attires, and vestments—in their usual converse and misuse of time—in their over liberal entertainment of themselves and others into the borders of excess, and other things of a like nature ; there is in many such a conformity to the world, (a thing severely forbidden,) that it is hard to make a distinction between them. And these things manifest such a predominancy of carnal affections in the minds of men, that, whatever may be pretended to the contrary, is inconsistent with spiritual peace.—OWEN.

not the least danger of being overheard, turned to Mrs. Vincent, and asked her some questions respecting Mr. Arlington, "Oh," said she, "he is a person you would like extremely: he is an able preacher, and most useful in his parish: *we*, indeed, are his parishioners, or I do not think he would have come to us today; he does not like dinner parties, and thinks they are not profitable to Christians. I sent him word, however, that we should have a country clergyman here who was preparing to go abroad as a missionary; and he was in consequence, induced to waive his usual plan, which is, to dine with us only when we are alone. I wish you could get him into conversation; elevated and profitable as his discourses are from the pulpit, his private conversation is even more so. He enters then into the most interesting points of a Christian's experience; helps you out of difficulties, resolves your doubts, and renders the path of religion so attractive, that you feel as if you acquired almost a new taste, while under his influence."

"How happy, how privileged you are to enjoy such a ministry," said Leighton. "Ah!" returned Mrs. Vincent, "you little know how hard it is for me to enjoy his society; much as I prize it, I am so embarrassed by the number of visitors who call, and the company I am obliged to invite, that I scarcely ever have the satisfaction of conversing with him. He has very little time for visiting, and whenever he has happened to come in the morning, I have been out of the way, or engaged with other people. Once

or twice, however, he has persevered in seeing me, even in the midst of my company, and sometimes he has succeeded in silencing their idle gossip, and charming us all into attention by some sweet observation, which has given a chastening to our minds, and a subject of sober reflections for hours, perhaps *days* afterwards."

A witty remark from Dr. Harewood, now interrupted the different *tete-a-tetes*, by the laugh excited at his end of the table. When quietness was a little restored, Leighton turned again to Mrs. Vincent, and asked whether Dr. Harewood and Mr. Arlington drew well together. "They are quite different characters," she replied—"The Doctor has astonishing powers as a preacher, and attracts great crowds to his church from all quarters,—Mr. Arlington, in this respect, is quite his inferior; but when Dr. Harewood is out of the pulpit, he almost ceases to be a divine; he becomes the agreeable, sociable, witty companion, an entertainment to every one, but edifying to none. Far be it from me to say, that he is not personally an excellent and religious man, but he yields too much to his natural propensity for humor; he seems generally to lose sight of the great object of his profession, to win souls to the Redeemer. He appears to throw off the cares and responsibilities of a minister, along with his robe and surplice; and hence, many who have been awakened to a sense of sin, by his power-

ful addresses in the pulpit, have been soothed into forgetfulness again, by his unwatchful conduct in private society."

Leighton shuddered: "I would not like to be in that man's place," said he; "he must either have a very dead conscience, or a very uneasy one."

Mrs. Vincent smiled. "You were always rigid, Mr. Leighton; at least Henry thinks so."

"Ah, I hope not; I don't wish to be thought rigid; but especially I would be sorry to judge hardly of a brother; but I confess I feel jealous for the high cause of Christ's religion. There is a compromising spirit in the professing world, which tends to level its standard, and to provide a neutral ground on which the carnal heart promises itself to enjoy all the privileges and pleasures of religion, unburdened by its cross. And if ministers—the guardians of the fold—those who are appointed to feed the sheep, *themselves* lead the way into this dangerous and often fatal neutrality; where the world meets them half-way, casting aside a few of her gross vices, and avowed deformities, on condition that the church shall drop her old-fashioned, but holy garb of single-mindedness and pure devotion to Christ, and adopt in its stead, the many-colored raiment of modern compromise; what can we expect from younger and more inexperienced Christians?"

Here Leighton was interrupted by Dr. Harewood, who addressed an observation across the table to Mrs. Vincent.

"You know our chapel is enlarged, Mrs. Vincent, I hope you mean to take a pew?"

"I don't know," she replied, looking timidly, first at Mr. Vincent, and then at Mr. Arlington, "your chapel is a considerable distance from us."

"Oh! that need be no objection," cried Mrs. Bloomfield; "I live much farther from it than you do; and when our horses are once out of the stable, I think it is little matter how far they go."

"But I have a better reason," said Mrs. Vincent, collecting a little courage; "without meaning the least disrespect to Dr. Harewood, our friend, Mr. Arlington, is our parish minister, and we can easily walk to his church every Sunday, without taking out either horses or servants; the latter can therefore attend public worship as well as ourselves. Doctor, let me send you a little sweet omelet."

"No, I thank you; I shall try the Italian salad."

"Lewis," said Mrs. Vincent to her servant, "carry the Italian salad to Dr. Harewood." The doctor being helped according to his wishes, now addressed himself to Mr. Arlington, and apologized for not having recollected that Mrs. Vincent belonged to his pastoral charge. "But pray, Mr. Arlington, let me recommend you to try a little of this orange jelly; you have taken nothing sweet." "Or some *Fondeux*," cried Mr. Vincent: "I know you take nothing sweet."

"No, thank you," replied Mr. Arlington, politely bowing to both invitations; "I have dined."

"Well, Mr. Arlington," resumed Mr. Harewood, "I trust you have no objection to Mrs. Vincent's becoming a patroness and visitor of our asylum; she has partly promised, but I am sure your approbation would decide her."

"You do me honor, Dr. Harewood," said the venerable minister, (bowing his head slightly,) "in supposing that I have influence over Mrs. Vincent. It is my duty and my wish to have her, and her family, immediately under my charge, as pastor, and to see them in their own place of worship; but I would leave her at perfect liberty to use her own discretion, in selecting any duties of Christian benevolence, for which she may choose to be responsible."

"I think, Dr. Harewood," said Mrs. Vincent, "I only proposed to become a *subscriber* to your asylum. I feel quite inadequate to the duties of a visitor. I am only a beginner myself, and should be ashamed to undertake the office of instructor in Christian truth, till I am far more experienced."

"Oh, Louisa," said Mrs. Bloomfield, laughing, "recollect that *I* am a visitor, and never was thought the least incompetent for the office. I do not certainly trouble the institution much with my religious instructions, because I am not one of those who think it necessary. I have no pretensions to be a saint; but *you*, my dear, have taken your degree in the calendar long ago, and therefore are fully qualified."

To this light speech, Mrs. Vincent made no reply;

but turning round to Leighton, she murmured in a low voice, and with a quivering lip—

“ A SAINT !—Oh, would that I could claim
The privileged, the honored name ;
And confidently take my stand
The lowest in the saintly band.
Would, though it were in scorn applied,
That term the test of truth could 'bide !
Like kindly salutations given
In mockery to the King of heaven.”

Leighton looked at her with extreme interest ; and while he lamented the various difficulties with which this well-disposed young person was surrounded, he rejoiced to see that there was a tenderness of soul, a susceptibility of divine impressions, and a longing after better enjoyments, which made the world and its ways a wearisomeness to her ; and induced him to hope that in due time her heart would be so completely overpowered by divine grace, that it would break through its fetters, and escape into true Christian liberty, the liberty of serving God with all the heart and soul, and mind and strength.

There was little opportunity for private conversation afterwards. When the cloth was removed it became a little more general, by the attention paid to Mr. Kerr, who was giving an account to Mr. Palmer of some successful philosophical experiment. Mrs. Vincent was exceedingly anxious to hear it, but was so often interrupted by irrelevant questions and remarks, from her female friends and

Major Bloomfield, none of whom seemed in the least interested, that she gave up the point, and shortly afterwards retired with the ladies to the drawing-room.

Mr. Arlington and Leighton were the earliest to follow. Henry, to the surprise and sorrow of his friend, was among the last ; he seemed afraid of close contact with him, and even when in the saloon, lingered in the immediate society of Dr. Harewood, or Mr. Palmer, as if to avoid the possibility of a *tet  -a-tet  *. Mr. Arlington and Leighton seemed, on the contrary, to have a mutual attraction, and when they fell into conversation, felt as intimate as if they had been acquainted for years. They had mutual objects of deep interest in the three principal individuals of this family, Mrs. Vincent, her brother, and her husband. Mr. Arlington seemed at once to understand the state of each, and entered, with parental tenderness, into the peculiar temptations and hindrances of Henry and Louisa. " I dislike this company keeping, very much," said he ; " these luxurious banquets strike at the very root of true religion ; they enfeeble the soul, and give strength to the corruptions of the body ; they render one unfit for spiritual conflict, and for holy warfare ; they habituate the mind to self-indulgence without remorse ; and they lull the conscience by making it compose itself with the thought, that as others do the same, it need not be severe in self-condemnation. We see in the very act, how difficult it is to converse *rationally*, not to say *spiritually*, at such entertainments. Such

constant interruptions occur, such invitations to overload the stomach, and over excite the taste, to pamper the flesh and depress the spirit, that I cannot wonder, if we are weaker and worse Christians, every time we so assemble together."

"I see the evil and its consequences strongly," said Leighton; "but how are our friends to avoid it, living in such a circle of society?"

"I feel for their difficulties," replied Mr. Arlington, "yet I see but one course for them to pursue. We cannot serve God and Mammon; nor can we please Christ and please the world. I know no *safety* in a middle course: I doubt even if there is real *sincerity* as long as we are contented with it. We are not thorough-going in allegiance to our Master, as long as we harbour willingly any of his enemies. But mark, I say, *willingly*, for I think there are many gracious souls drawn in through example, or weakness, into the snare of worldly conformity; who do it reluctantly; and who feel it a thralldom preventing the growth and expansion of spiritual mindedness; such, I believe, are always delivered from it sooner or later, but not without deep loss, and probably some afflictive dispensation."

"I will put an objection to you," said Leighton, "not as my own, but as the suggestion of others, having often heard it made. How are Christian believers to act, if they give up entertainments? Are they to withdraw from society, and cease from friendly intercourse?"

"By no means. On the contrary, hospitality and

social intercourse are supposed and enjoined in Scripture: but mark in what way we are to meet; for *edification*; our conversation is to be seasoned with salt, that it may minister grace to the hearers; we are to remember our *citizenship* is in heaven,* and converse like those who belong to another country: whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, we are to do all to the glory of God; and if we make an *entertainment*, we are to call, not our rich neighbours and friends, but the poor, the maimed, the halt, and the blind."

Leighton smiled. "If these primitive ideas were acted upon," said he, "I fear we should have the religious world in an uproar."

"Some individuals, perhaps," said Mr. Arlington; "but my idea is, that many would rejoice, and follow the example, if they saw a few, bold enough to break through established customs, and take the lead in Christian consistency. Incalculable good would also be the result in various ways. The merely worldly partizans of the church would drop off: they would laugh and ridicule for a few days, and then the wonder would cease, and close intimacy would be suspended; a saving to the struggling believer of many snares and temptations, the necessary attendants on close contact with carnal minds. Next, there would be a saving of much needless display and expense; the inconsistency of those things would at once declare itself, if the eye was

* For our conversation (or citizenship) is in heaven. Phil. iii. 20.

single for God, and had no longer an undue regard for human approbation. Conscience unfettered, would then feel a pleasure in dedicating all things to His service, and the money now squandered in superfluities, and self-indulgence, would go to feed the poor, or to support the cause of the Gospel.

“*Time* would be redeemed. How hard does the Christian female find it to make out hours for retirement, to read and pray, or to fulfil the duties of a mistress, (who knows the value of her own soul,) to the souls of her household and domestic circle, not to say those which she may have occasion to perform as a member of society at large! The arrangement of her domestics, encumbered with various charges; the responsibility of a large mansion filled with gay furniture, which must be taken care of, ‘lest moth or rust should corrupt, or thieves break through and steal:’ the receiving of idle morning visits, and returning them; the daily providing for a sumptuous table; and constant dissipation of mind, from evenings of idle, unprofitable intercourse. All these hindrances would be removed, by the courageous avowal of being determined to live for eternity, and to obey the word of the Lord Jesus, at whatever cost; then would she find her opportunities for self-instruction, and for teaching others, abundant; her own soul would flourish; her household would find the blessing; and instead of the meagre skeleton of religion which we now see in so many families, we should find, every where, the righteous flourishing as palm trees.”

“The Christian minister, too,” said Leighton,

"would, I think, find great advantage from such a change. He is necessarily much restrained in conversation, under circumstances like the present."

"Restrained ! Oh, Sir, it is painful beyond expression. Perhaps by-and-by you will see the Bible put into my hand, and I shall be requested to lecture and pray ; but what preparation of heart is there in the company, after intercourse such as this, after so much self-indulgence, so much idle talk and frivolity among the young, so much sleepiness and stupidity in the elders, as you will perceive throughout the room, when all have come up from the parlour?"

While they were thus conversing, coffee was brought in ; the gentlemen came up by degrees into the saloon, and fell into different groups ; tea succeeded ; and afterwards music was called for. Mrs. Bloomfield excelled on the harp ; she played two or three beautiful melodies, and afterwards sung an air to which some simple words had been adapted ; she sung with considerable taste and pathos. Mr. Arlington seemed affected. " You do not object to music as an entertainment ?" said Leighton inquiringly. " No," said he ; " and I think what we hear now is suitable to the present party. I would rather hear it than a *hymn*, if the mind is not prepared to join with interest. I do not like sacred music introduced merely as an entertainment ; but it is sweet and refreshing indeed, when the heart and voice correspond. It is on the convivial occasions, when Christians meet together for mutual pleasure and sociability, that sacred music would be a delightful resource. ' Is any merry, let

him sing psalms.' It is the natural expression of holy cheerfulness, anticipating one of the joys and occupations of the heavenly state."

Mrs. Vincent was now solicited by Mr. Palmer, who was fond of music, to take her seat at the piano. She played and sung extremely well, and after performing with much softness and grace, the beautiful pastoral symphony with which Handel introduces one of his songs of the "Messiah," she sang the recitative, "There were shepherds abiding in the field." Leighton was so charmed with the lovely sounds and divine subject, that he almost forgot where he was, till roused from his reverie by the cessation of the music, and Mr. Vincent's approaching Mr. Arlington, and requesting he would conclude the evening with family prayer. It was by no means the custom in Mr. Vincent's house, to have this observance on *usual* occasions; nor would it have answered very well, for the company was generally of too mixed a character; but Mr. Arlington made it a rule never to leave any house, without thus acting as a Christian minister, reading some portion of the word of God, and praying for pardon and a blessing before separation. In whatever house he found this duty impracticable, he never accepted a second invitation. The Bible was now produced: Mr. Arlington selected the twelfth chapter of Romans, and made a few short observations on the first verses; he was careful not to be tedious, for he perceived his audience little disposed to attention. Mr. Kerr was not present, he having left the party before tea, to attend an en-

gagement at some literary club ; Dr. Harewood had also departed, and the rest of the gentlemen seemed stupid and sleepy, (with the exception of Leighton,) and the ladies were looking pale and wearied, and as if they would have yawned, had good breeding permitted. They had no great reason to complain, however, of the portion of time dedicated to religion ; for Mr. Arlington's reading and prayer did not occupy more than one quarter of an hour. Immediately afterwards he took his leave, and left the house, accompanied by Leighton.

CHAPTER X.

There is joy in heaven,
There is joy in heaven,
When the sheep that went astray
Turns again to virtue's way,—
When the soul, by grace subdued,
Sobs its prayer of gratitude,
There is joy in heaven.

BISHOP HEBER.

For a day or two, Leighton did not go to Upper Brooke-street: he felt deeply grieved at Henry's marked avoidance of his society, and he thought it best to wait a little to see if his absence would produce any inquiry. Meanwhile, he continued in earnest, unceasing prayer for his friend, assured that this would do more in bringing means of deliverance from the snares of the tempter, than the most watchful guardianship that human prudence could devise. But while Leighton's mind was thus in a state of suspense and painful exercise, sustained only by faith

and prayer, Henry was undergoing a discipline also, well suited to the circumstances into which he had fallen.

Henry was far from happy, the evening his friend had spent at Mr. Vincent's; nor did he sleep well that night. The next day, he expected, and dreaded, a visit from Leighton; and it was considerable relief to him when evening closed in, and brought no intrusion: not that he had ceased to love and respect him, but he felt his presence a burden and a reproach. Yet he liked his present mode of life too well to wish to change it, or to be candid, in confessing his uneasiness and misgivings to any one. A second day passed over, and Leighton did not come. This circumstance was at once a relief and a disappointment; for Henry knew his friend's affection too well not to be assured, that his absence could only be caused by wounded feeling. That night he went to bed in no very comfortable state of mind. He tried to pray, but his heart was cold, and his thoughts wandered. After tossing uneasily on his pillow for some time, he fell into a kind of imperfect slumber, from whence he was suddenly aroused by a sensation of cramp in the breast. He sat up in his bed, and gasped with agony. In a few minutes, the pain relaxed, but, after a short interval, returned again, and thus repeated its attacks five or six times. A cold, icy chill came over his whole frame, a damp dew stood on his forehead, and now he thought the grasp of death was upon him. In all the energy of a last effort for self-preservation, he sprang from his bed, threw on his

dressing-gown, and groping his way to the apartment of a servant who slept in the room overhead, roused him, and asked him to procure immediately a little hot water. The servant, drowsy and affrighted, declared there was no such thing in the house, nor even a spark of fire to heat it. "Get me, then, some medicine—laudanum, peppermint, anything; for I am in agony." "The housekeeper, sir, has all those things in her charge: her door is locked, and I don't think it would rouse her to hear that the house was on fire." "Then I must die," said Henry, in a calm tone of despair; but the calmness was constrained, for he returned, shivering, to his chamber in an agony of body and mind. He threw himself on his face on the bed, and thought, with horror, that death was just at hand. He felt deprived of every comfort, every assurance. The sins of his heart rose up in fearful array before him: any one of them seemed quite sufficient to condemn him to eternal destruction. He felt he had slighted his Redeemer's love, turned his back upon his ways, broken his baptismal covenant, chosen the approbation of men of the world, instead of that of God, grown cold in his duties, neglectful in prayer, and ceased to love the company of the saints. "Oh," thought he, "I have not one token for heaven, one mark of God's family. If ever I was one, I am now cast out. I am unworthy of a lot among them: I am doomed to have my portion with unbelievers! I shall perish miserably! Where, where shall I go? Can I ask Him to plead for me, whose love I have slighted? O, no, no! Death!

death ! O, *this is thy sting !*" Thus he continued to writhe in exquisite anguish. His own conscience turned accuser, and the enemy, strengthening him in unbelief, he might have mourned and raved much longer, and perhaps have sunk under the violence of the spasms with which his stomach and chest were affected, if the servant whom he had called, had not now entered with a light, and bringing with him the only cordial within his own reach to procure : this was a small quantity of brandy, from which the spirit had been partly extracted, by setting it on fire. Henry was now too much exhausted to inquire as to the nature or fitness of the remedy—the servant poured it without resistance down his throat, and having replaced him in bed, began to rub his limbs with flannel, to restore circulation. In a short time he became much easier, and fell into a slumber ; but the kind servant did not leave him, till assured that the spasm was subdued. In the morning Henry felt so poorly, that he was scarcely able to rise for breakfast, and when he appeared at the table, his brother and sister were shocked at his pallid countenance and air of languor. On ascertaining the events of the night, Mrs. Vincent requested he would allow her to send for a physician, as advice might be necessary to prevent a recurrence of the attack ; but Henry would not consent to this ; he said, he had now no pain, and nothing particular to complain of ; but that he would stay at home, and keep quiet all day.

" I think then," said Mrs. Vincent, " you had

better exclude visitors, for you look quite too wearied to bear any excitement, and if you do not use prudence, the pain may recur again."

"I will not see any one but Leighton," replied Henry; "he may perhaps call, though I fear he will not," and he sighed.

The sigh, though very soft, and not intended to be noticed, was caught by the quick ear of his sister, who thought it intimated an anxiety to see his friend. She therefore retired after breakfast, and privately wrote a note to Leighton, mentioning how unwell Henry had been, and the wish he seemed to feel for his society. Leighton did not require more than a hint, and in the course of the morning, went to Upper Brooke-street; he was immediately admitted, and ushered into a small ante-room next to the saloon; it was comfortably furnished, as if for reading and retirement, but with a view to ease and indulgence, having an abundance of sofas and cushions, &c. Henry was seated near the fire, with a book in his hand; the moment Leighton entered, he dropped it, and springing forward, exclaimed, "My dear true friend, you are welcome—sit down here, for I want very much to speak to you."

"I am very sorry to find you have not been well, Henry. How do you feel yourself now?"

"Oh better, as to health—I am in no pain *now*; but I am sick—sick at heart, Leighton. I fear I am beyond mercy, at least I thought so last night. A thick cloud of wrath seemed to hang over my head; *my sins* stared me in the face. I thought my last

hour was come," and here Henry entered into the particulars of his mental conflict. "This morning," he continued, "I feel a little hope; but it varies and disappears like the shining of yon sun-beams on the wall."

"But dear Henry," said Leighton, "did no view of Jesus rise on your soul to give you comfort?—did you not remember that for *you*, and such as you, a sinner! unworthy, self-convicted, abandoned by every other hope, He was crucified and slain?"

"No, Leighton, I did not feel it was for *me* he suffered, nor do *I now*—no, not for me. A horrible thought came into my mind, which deprived me of all hope; and just now when you came in, I was reading the passage, and trying to persuade myself it did not mean me; but, oh, I know, I feel it does." He showed Leighton the 4th, 5th, and 6th verses in vi. Hebrews,* which has distressed so many souls through the power of unbelief, and the artful suggestions of man's spiritual enemy.

"My dear friend," replied Leighton, "you have no reason whatever to apply these expressions to your own case. They describe a state of absolute apostacy—a state in which there is avowed enmity to God, both in heart and life, rendered the more dreadful, because it is spoken of individuals who had enjoyed all the privileges of Gospel light, and made a profession."

"Ah, yes; that's it," interrupted Henry; "I have

* For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, &c.

enjoyed so much—had so many privileges—fancied myself fit to teach others,” and the tears sprung into his eyes.

“Henry,” said Leighton tenderly, and grasping him by the hand, “this sense of sin, this contrition of heart, these tears, do not belong to the *apostate*—he is hardened, he laments not his loss—he mourns not for his backsliding, therefore the blood of Jesus cannot be applied to *him*: the very sorrow and anxiety you shew lest *yours* should be this lost case, PROVES IT IS NOT. The Spirit of God has not departed from you: if It had, you would say nothing upon the subject; but It is humbling and melting you; It is shewing you that you trusted too much to your own heart; that you imagined yourself strong, when, indeed, you were a babe for weakness; and therefore you were allowed to fall into temptation, that you might learn a lesson of faith and humility.”

“Leighton, you speak words of comfort, but I cannot believe them.”

“Well, if you will not believe me, hear what comfortable words our Saviour Christ saith to all who truly long for him—‘Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.’”

“Ah! Leighton, if I could feel these words applied to *me*.”

“As much to *you* as to any living soul; and *more*, dear Henry, since I believe you are one who truly desires to be reconciled to God. But *beware of indulging unbelief*! You may think it is only just

and right to decide hardly of yourself; and so it is: but the tempter will be on the watch to bring you one step farther, which is, to think *despairingly* of yourself; and what is this but to think hardly of CHRIST? Is it not to doubt the truth of his love; the sincerity of his invitations; the power of his intercession; the efficacy of his blood? The use of conviction is, to lead us to his feet. Any feeling which brings us *there* is from himself: any feeling which would drive us from him, is from beneath, and is one of the modes by which Satan entraps souls: he persuades them that their unbelief is only a becoming humility, and thus he keeps them from true blessed assurance of pardon. It is the *pardoned* believer *who knows and feels* he is cleansed in the blood of the Lamb, that understands the nature of *true humility*; he feels he has *nothing separate* from Christ, that he owes *all* to him; that his justification and his holiness are the gifts of free grace; that his happiness flows from the fountain above, and his usefulness depends on a strength not his own: he is, therefore, driven out of all self-resources or self-complacency; and is, by his very necessities and dependence, constrained to abide in Christ. '*As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me.*'"*

"Do you think, Leighton," said Henry, abruptly, "that I was ever converted?"

"Why do you ask?"

"Because, if I *ever* was, there is a doctrine would

* John, xv. 4.

give me comfort ; that which assures us of the everlasting security of the Lord's people. If I really am His, I have nothing to fear."

"My dear Henry, this is not a safe way to speak upon the subject. The assurances of the Lord Jesus, as to his eternal love for his redeemed ones, was never intended to give us presumptuous confidence when we have forfeited the light of his countenance by sinful departure from his ways: it is only when we are walking humbly and faithfully, that we can take comfort from these promises. When our minds are darkened by sin, and indulgence of the carnal nature, the Holy Spirit makes no application of these divine comforts, and we can feel no just ground of encouragement from them. Though faith is the direct gift of God, and our comforts flow altogether from him; yet in order to make the soul diligent and watchful, we do not find faith bright in her evidences, or consolation poured in, so as to satisfy, except where there is a faithful walk with Him."

"But, Leighton, you do not answer my question."

"Henry, if you wish me seriously to answer it, I will tell you what I think. I believe you were dedicated to the Lord in baptism, by believing parents, who offered you to him, as Samuel was offered by Hannah; and that such an ordinance, when rightly performed, is a means of grace, and is accompanied by a divine blessing, I have no doubt. Your education was conducted in the fear of God. Your parents prayed much for you, and set you a good exam-

ple ; and from the early inclination you showed for religious studies and exercises, I am led to conclude, that the Spirit of the Lord has been operating upon your soul from infancy. But, Henry, whether the saving change has passed upon you which is called *regeneration*, and without which you cannot enter into the kingdom of God, is a matter more for your own inquiry than mine. In the situation in which you were placed, you were liable to some self-deception ; and I will freely confess, that from my first acquaintance with you, I thought there was more of romance and youthful enthusiasm, than of reality in your religious profession. You seemed to mistake the ardency of natural temperament, for Christian zeal ; the correct, moral, and serious habits of education, for the life of regeneration ; and the providential circumstances of birth and connection, which had brought you up apart from the world, for a renunciation, on principle, of its pomps and vanities. A partial introduction into scenes of temptation has, in some degree, disclosed the state of your heart ; for no sooner did opportunity arise, than the carnal nature perceived a delightful congeniality in all the allurements presented ; and you yielded at once, without conflict. Had you been *spiritually-minded*, the tempter would not have found so easy a prey."

"Well, Leighton, if it is then true, (as I suspected last night,) that I am not really a partaker in Christ, what am I to do?"

"That is a just and an important question. The inquiry as to what you *have* been, is of far less

moment than that respecting what you *are* now. You feel you want evidences of being adopted into the family of God, and of having an inheritance in his promises. You must, then, come to the Lord Jesus, as if for the first time. You must come to have his atoning blood applied, as the only remedy to wash away your sins. You must come believing his invitations; trusting to his love: and Oh! Henry, if thus you come, be assured he *will in no wise cast you out.*"*

"Ah! Leighton, there I feel the difficulty. My heart is hard, and refuses to come; neither can I believe that one so ungrateful as I have been, can ever be accepted."

"*I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely,*"* said Leighton, repeating the words of the Lord to his ungrateful church. "No state can be so low that he cannot raise it up; no disease so formidable that he cannot heal it; no heart so alienated that he cannot restore it."

"Ah! but all you say feels as if it fell upon a rock. I cannot receive it. I dare not trust it. It would be presumptuous for *me* to hope so much."

"My dearest Henry," returned Leighton, "nothing dishonors God so much, or displeases and grieves his Holy Spirit, like this *determinate* unbelief. How could your offended Creator have been *himself* the atonement, *himself* the sinner's substitute, *himself* the mediator, if his character were so

* John, vi. 37.

† Hosea, xiv. 4.

implacable as Satan's representations would make it? Drive such low, degrading, sinful thoughts from your heart; tear the veil of unbelief that conceals his loving countenance from your eyes:

“ Venture on him, venture wholly,
Let no other trust intrude :

And you will find him revealed to you in all his sufficiency, ‘ The God *that healeth thee.*’ ”*

Henry was silent: he looked pained and thoughtful. At length he said, “ Leighton, pray for me. I have long ceased to pray in the true sense of the word: pray for me now.”

Willingly did his friend accede to this request, and they both knelt down together. Leighton felt great power to plead the prayer of faith. He thought he perceived the genuine workings of spiritual conviction in his beloved Henry's mind; and that there was a deeper evidence of the operation of grace now in his condition than he had ever witnessed on former occasions. Henry wept during his friend's prayer, and suppressed the groanings of his spirit; but he did not look refreshed or comforted when it was concluded.

“ I think I will leave you now,” said Leighton; “ you look as if you needed repose; but I will see you tomorrow, or, if you wish, at any time in the interval; a message from you will bring me in five minutes.”

Henry looked, indeed, much flushed when Leigh-

* Exod. xv. 29.

ton took his leave; his head was aching severely, and he felt a weariness in his limbs. He lay on the sofa all day, but was unable to appear at dinner; and when his sister saw him in the evening, she found his hands so hot, and his appearance so unfavourable, that she insisted on sending for a physician.

As soon as Dr. Chartres saw his patient, he pronounced his case to be fever—ordered him to be blooded, and sent immediately to bed. That night he spent in great uneasiness—suffered greatly in his head, and often spoke incoherently to his attendant—called him constantly by the name of Leighton, and asked him to pray for him. The next morning he was a little calmer and easier; but the doctor desired he should be kept as quiet as possible, see no company, and not be allowed to read or converse. However, Henry told his sister, that if Leighton came, he *must* see him. Mrs. Vincent felt very uneasy about disobeying the physician's injunctions, yet she could not altogether refuse her brother's request. She was thus in perplexity when Leighton himself arrived, and she immediately stated the difficulty to him. "Let *me* be his nurse, my dear Mrs. Vincent," said this faithful friend, "and it will remove every objection. As a *visitor*, I might excite him—I might do him harm; but as his *nurse*, I may be of some use." Mrs. Vincent, at first, hesitated to accept this kind offer; she thought it was imposing too much trouble; and, as it was a fever, that he himself might be exposed to unfair risk. But Leighton would not hear any such arguments, and he pleaded his wish so

earnestly, and with such genuine affection and disinterestedness, that Mrs. Vincent, who secretly rejoiced at the idea of having such a companion and attendant for her brother, no longer opposed him, but led the way to the sick chamber. The room was partially darkened; but as Mrs. Vincent entered softly, she heard Henry murmur, "Is he come? is Leighton come?" "Yes, Henry; and, if you like it, he is ready to stay with you, and sit here all day and night to take care of you." "Oh! is he? How kind! Come in; come *here*; where are you?" Leighton now approached; he grasped his feverish hand. "Henry, my dear friend, I am here, and am going to stay; so don't excite yourself, nor say a word. I will be your nurse, and *you* shall be my patient; and be very obedient, for I must not let you do yourself harm." "Enough, enough! you are here; I can look at you; I can see you praying for me; I will feel the touch of your kind hand, and know the sound of your friendly voice;" and Henry fixed earnestly his eyes upon his friend's face, and smiled faintly. Leighton was shocked to observe the inflamed look of his eyes, and the uncertain tremulous tone of his voice. After Mrs. Vincent had withdrawn, he sat down, therefore, quietly by the bedside; and closing the shutters of the window still more, encouraged his friend to compose himself to sleep, promising to watch by his side. But Henry did not seem at all disposed to sleep. He tossed himself incessantly; and, as evening drew on apace, he began to rave so much, that the physician was sent for.

second time. His case seemed now to be a brain fever. The most active remedies were prescribed, and his head shaved, in order to apply the usual means for abating inflammation. Now, indeed, were the services of his friend called into action ; the hand and eye of Leighton were ever at his pillow to relieve or assist him ; his medicines and refreshments were administered ; his bed smoothed ; his burning brow cooled by the tender assiduity of this watchful friend.

Mrs. Vincent would have aided, and was much in the room ; but the violence of Henry's delirium was such, that her husband felt it his duty to restrain her, as far as possible, from witnessing the distressing scene. It was often as much as he and Leighton together could accomplish to keep poor Henry in his bed, while quite unconscious of his own state or of his obligations to his friends. For several days he knew no one, not even the voice or figure of his sister or Leighton ; but he was continually talking, and raving in the heart-rending language of despair ; he soliloquized to his own spirit, as if it was already lost—cast out of the presence of God for ever ; and often he called out for Leighton, as if he had abandoned him, and said, “ Yes ; justly, justly has he left me ; unworthy I was ; hell-deserving I am ; God has forsaken me ; Christ has cast me out ; the evil one waits for his prey.” For several days and nights this fearful raving continued, with occasional abatement ; and during the whole time, Leighton never left his side, and only once took a few hours' repose on a pallet in the room. At length the crisis of the

disease approached; but Dr. Chartres entertained little hope of its being favourable; for his weakness increased greatly. After lying quiet for some time, on that day, he was heard to say, "Lord Jesus, *save, save, or I perish;*" and he sprung out of bed at the same moment. Leighton was at hand, and seized him gently, to lead him back again. He instantly uttered a cry of inexpressible anguish, and wildly muttered, "Yes, yes; thou hast cast me out; thou hast put me away; thou couldst not receive *me*; I am unworthy." And again, "*Thy rebuke hath broken my heart.*" He lay down quietly, as if wholly exhausted. The paroxysm seemed to go off: intelligence to return to his countenance; but it was the expression of hopeless despair. The physician, at this moment, entered the room, and, approaching, felt his pulse. He made a sign to Leighton, and whispered, "It is as I feared; he is sinking rapidly."

"Oh! Sir," said Leighton, "is there nothing to hope?"

"Indeed," very little; the disease has been of a most violent kind, and I fear his constitution cannot contend with it. The distress his mind seems to be in, aggravates it greatly."

A faint, smothered voice from the bed now called, "Leighton! Leighton!"

He sprang forward, and saw death marking the countenance of his poor young friend. Leighton clasped his clammy hand, and put his ear close to the quivering lip of Henry, to catch the now almost inaudible sound.

"Leighton, this is DEATH!"

“ Oh ! Henry, lift up then your soul to the Lord Jesus ; confide in *Him*—trust Him. Can you, do you feel Him near to your soul ? Have you any comfort ? my Henry ! my *brother* ! Press my hand, if you can give me but the faintest assurance.” No pressure was made. “ Shall I pray for you ? shall we all pray for you ? ” cried Leighton, seeing Mrs. Vincent now enter, with the doctor, who had gone to call her. He felt the feeble hand make a sign.

Leighton, with an extraordinary emotion, turned now to Mrs. Vincent, as she sunk on her knees by the bed-side, and said, in the most solemn tone, “ *If two of you shall agree, as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.** Now, now for faith to plead this promise. His name is Faithful and True. He will not deny the prayer of faith. Now let us agonize for the soul of our beloved. Lord Jesus, HEAR ! Lord Jesus, thou who art all love—thou who didst die to manifest thy love—behold, behold *him* who now lies under thy hand, broken and wounded, because of sin, at the very gate of death. Thou dost not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax. Hear, then, O blessed, *blessed* Lord, on behalf of his soul, and save him by thy most precious blood. Sprinkle him—cleanse him. Say unto his soul, *Thy sins be forgiven*. Reveal thyself as the God of pardon, of mercy, of redemption. Lord Jesus, save beloved Henry ! ”

* Matt. xxiii. 19.

Lord Jesus, save beloved Henry! was echoed by the sobbing voice of the kneeling sister.

"Henry! Henry! *look up*, my Henry, or *press* my hand, if you feel hope!" But Henry closed his eyes, and made no sign.

"O Thou, who wouldst not have one sinner die, behold the anguish of our souls. Rebuke the enemy, and give *him* whom we bear in the arms of faith before thee, power to believe. Thou, who didst raise Lazarus, when four days in the grave, revive and quicken now. Thou, who didst weep in sympathy with human suffering *then*, manifest thy blest compassion *now*. Lord Jesus save, *oh, save!*"

At this moment a deep shade flitted over Henry's countenance; his mouth frothed, and he breathed a heavy sigh: a stillness seemed to follow, and Mrs. Vincent, rising from her knees, uttered, with a half-suppressed shriek, "He is gone!"

Leighton, who was quite overcome with the exquisite emotions of anguish which had been rending his soul, no sooner heard this exclamation than he sunk down insensible, dropping the beloved hand he had held so long: his head rested on the bedside, and he was still in the attitude of prayer. The physician approached, and took the hand; he felt a long time for the pulse, with a look of great anxiety, while Mrs. Vincent, still as death, and almost breathless, watched his countenance. At length he whispered softly, "his pulse yet vibrates: 'tis but a thread; yet life is not extinct, and all things are *possible*."

He then forced a few drops of some medicine into Henry's mouth, which after a little seemed to revive him; he again sighed, and partly opened his eyes.

"He is in a most critical state," said Dr. Chartres, "and must not be spoken to now; remain here if you have firmness to do so, and pour into his mouth every now and then, a few more of these drops. Meantime I must get this other young man removed, and taken care of, or his life will be the forfeit of his uncommon friendship and ardent feelings."

Poor Leighton was raised cautiously and gently from the attitude in which he had fainted, and conveyed into another apartment. Being laid on a bed, and roused by the application of volatile salts, he opened his eyes, and looked wildly around. The first words he uttered, were the last he had heard—and "*He is gone—he is gone!*" broke mournfully from his lips. "No, I assure you, Mr. Leighton," said Dr. Chartres, "*he* is not yet past hope; even now when I left the room his pulse seemed gaining strength, and if it please God to bring him favourably through this crisis, I have no doubt he will recover." Poor Leighton looked painfully incredulous; he groaned and turned away his head, as if he thought he was mocked. "Well, then," said the Doctor, "I will return to him for a little, and, if on a second investigation, my report agree with what I have already told you, I hope you will take comfort from it: compose yourself, for you are quite worn out." Accordingly, Dr. Chartres went into Henry's apart-

ment, and found Mrs. Vincent, with all the resolution and firmness requisite for so great an occasion, and so often displayed by the female character, watching intensely by the bed-side, and administering the medicines in obedience to his directions. Henry had not spoken; his half-closed eyes seemed occupied with no *external* object, but his countenance had assumed a natural appearance, and his pulse, though frequent, was regular, and perceptibly stronger. The doctor stayed a short time, and then whispered a few encouraging words to Mrs. Vincent, after which he returned to Leighton, for whom he felt much interested: he succeeded, with some difficulty, in administering the balm of hope, and at length persuaded him to take a composing draught, in order to procure a little sleep. The physician had two objects in view, one was, to give Leighton's body and mind repose, a matter now become of essential importance; the other, to keep him and Henry apart during a few critical hours, as he feared that they might produce mutual and dangerous excitement, if brought together under present circumstances.

Mrs. Vincent obtained leave from her husband to sit up with Henry that night. He had now continued many hours in a state of half-insensibility, taking no notice of any person or object, yet breathing and swallowing with ease. About midnight he looked around and spoke for the first time; he called the name of his friend, in a firm and articulate voice, "Leighton!—Leighton!" Mrs. Vincent was close at hand; she leaned over him, and replied, "My

brother, poor Leighton is fatigued ; we have forced him to lie down ; but your sister is here, your Louisa, my Henry."

"My sweet sister," was his reply, and his eyes opened upon her with a look of tenderest love, while a beaming smile illuminated his countenance ; "my own beloved Louisa, I have had a dream—such a dream ! I have seen and felt things unutterable. I have passed through the valley of darkness, I am now in the bowers of light."

Mrs. Vincent feared his delirium was returning, and gently entreated him to compose himself and be still.

"Louisa, my sister !" answered Henry, solemnly, "I am not raving, hear me, while I tell you : I was near death this morning—yes, on the very brink I stood. I thought myself a lost soul. I had no power to believe. I heard and saw all that passed. I saw Leighton's agony ; I felt your tears ; he asked me to give him a sign, but I had no power to give it ; my soul seemed in hopeless thralldom, my body dissolving and deserting it. But, oh, my sister, even while he prayed, though I could afford him no intimation of it, the veil of unbelief fell from my eyes, and the rocky hardness of my heart was broken. Jesus, the Lamb of God, seemed revealed—the atonement, the propitiation for all my sins. Methought I saw him ; it could not have been with my bodily eyes ; but surely it was *a reality I felt*. His voice seemed to say to me, as he said to Peter, 'Lovest thou me ?' and I thought I answered, and

felt at that moment the love flowing into my heart : ‘ Lord, thou knowest all things—thou knowest that I love thee.’ I felt as if my soul was at his feet, offering itself up with all its powers to be His servant ; and it appeared as if my natural clothing dropped off, and a new robe was thrown over me by His own blessed hand. Louisa, this appears half a dream, yet I have been awake many hours, and all the time that has passed since, I felt to myself as if I was a new creature. My doubts, and fears, and agonizing pangs are gone. I can trust *my* Lord Jesus for all things. Yes, sister, *mine*—I say *MINE*, for he has made me *His* by purchase ! by the precious ransom of His blood ! by his coming to seek and to save me when I was lost. I am His—*His for ever*, and *He is mine*.” Mrs. Vincent was too much affected to speak, she sobbed with joy.

Henry continued in an animated tone: “O death, where is thy sting !—O grave, where is thy victory ! Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Dissolve this frail tabernacle, O Lord, if it be thy holy will, and hasten me home to thee. Why, why should I linger here ? Why should I return to the ensnaring temptations of the world, from which thou hast set me free ? Shall I live to sin yet again ? O, Master ! Saviour ! Sanctifier ! forbid the thought, and rather take me now from this polluted ground, than suffer me to live and grieve thy long-suffering Spirit, once, even once.”

Mrs. Vincent took his hand. “ Oh, Henry,” she

cried, "lead me, lead me, till I find Him whom you have found; lead me to the foot of the Lord Jesus; help me to find him; ask Him will he receive me?"

"Receive you! beloved sister! Oh! doubt it never, since he has received *me*; so unworthy, so unbelieving a reptile as *me*! Could there have been a worse, a more hopeless case than mine? Come, then, my own Louisa, fear not; doubt not; let us both say—

"Nothing in our hands we bring,
Simply to thy cross we cling.

And oh! what blessedness shall we find in coming. No disappointment, no waiting, no false promises there. Yea, he gives a thousand fold more than we ask or expect; fulness of pardon! fulness of joy!"

Thus Henry continued to express himself for some time, with an energy of voice and manner that was quite astonishing. Leighton was in the next room, which was only divided by a partition, and having awoke from his slumbers, heard his voice distinctly, though he could not distinguish the words; he feared the strength of the tone indicated a high state of fever, and rose up on his elbow, in the bed, to try and discern if the language was still of a painful character. The few words he caught, now and then, conveyed no distinct idea, but he thought they did not sound as if from a sorrowing heart. Presently, a few low notes struck his ear—he knew the tune and the voice; it was Mrs. Vincent's. But another voice, feeble indeed,

yet still more dear to him, seemed trying to chime in: he listened breathlessly, and knew these were the words sung:

“How sweet the name of Jesus sounds
To a believer’s ear;
It soothes his sorrow, heals his wounds,
And drives away his fear.”

“Yes yes!” loudly shouted the voice that Leighton knew and loved so well; “the name of Jesus is most sweet—most precious.”

Leighton burst into an agony of tears—the first, the only tears he had shed since his childhood: he needed no more to break to his mind the intelligence that his beloved friend was at length reconciled to God, and enabled to believe and rejoice. He rose from his couch, and prostrating himself low before the Lord, gave thanks in speechless gratitude; he felt *unutterably*. Joy over his friend, and adoring love to the Hearer of prayer—the unchanging Jehovah, whose promises had proved so faithful in their fulfilment—whose loving-kindness had been so manifest—so filled his heart that no audible word escaped; he was able to do no more than to throw himself before the throne of Divine mercy, and wait there till he felt his strength renewed, and his composure return.

CHAPTER XI.

Truths which in other days I heard,
But never felt their worth before.

CAMPBELL.

HENRY appearing decidedly better, the next morning was the scene of a joyous meeting between the friends. The manner of Leighton was like the tender love of a Joseph for a Benjamin: and Henry seemed to regard him with tenfold the esteem and affection he had ever expressed before. They were now brothers in sympathy; they had a union of spirit that drew them inexpressibly together; and Henry would have talked all day, and Leighton have listened with untired ear to the pleasing theme, if Dr. Chartres had not warned the latter of the possibility and danger of relapse, if much care was not taken. This apprehension might not have produced caution in Henry, whose new-born soul seemed on the wing for heaven, and who seemed rather to dread than desire recovery; but Leighton earnestly wished

and hoped for the prolongation of his life: he believed in the Lord's power and willingness to preserve the soul of his redeemed one, even in the midst of evil; and he felt he could trust him for this strengthening grace, when the young Christian's time of need should arrive; he spoke, therefore, gently and rationally to Henry on the duty of submitting to the Lord's will, and of taking life or death with equal resignation from his hands; and he was much encouraged to find the meekness and docility with which he was heard and attended to, so different from the captious and argumentative spirit with which he had formerly received every opinion that differed from his own.

The task of attending to Henry, during the remainder of his illness, was a light and pleasant one. Through the blessing of God on the means used, his recovery was progressive and satisfactory; and his cheerful thankful spirit diffused joy over the hearts of his companions. Mr. and Mrs. Vincent were deeply affected by the change that had taken place; it led them into a close inquiry into the state of their own minds, as to whether their profession of religion was genuine; whether it led to the glory of God, and prepared the way for making a death-bed easy. This solemn investigation humbled them deeply, for they perceived that they had been living in a low, dead, carnal state—one in which there was neither comfort, nor consistency, nor safety; and that, if they would be Christians indeed, they must resolve to deny themselves, take up the cross, and follow their Master without compromise. Mrs. Vincent's character became

also more marked by decision in religion; and though, at first, her husband seemed to shrink from the idea of the ridicule it might excite in his circle, if he was known to alter his style of living; yet he was enabled, through divine grace, to resolve to follow the light of conscience wherever he could clearly see his duty.

Henry's illness had prevented the entertainment of company for some time, and no visitors had been admitted from the commencement of it, except Mr. Arlington. *He* was now become a most favourite and acceptable companion to the family, and he was of no small service in clearing up their views, and strengthening their resolutions to become wholly devoted to the Lord.

The family party was now augmented by the arrival of Mr. and Mrs. Villeroi. The latter had been severely indisposed when the first news arrived respecting her son, and she was consequently unable to travel immediately to London, as she would have wished. Mr. Villeroi had remained with her in the most painful state of suspense; but neither of them knew the imminent peril Henry had been in, till their arrival in Upper Brooke-street, as Mrs. Vincent had been cautious in writing, knowing her mother's delicate state of health. These kind and Christian parents were greatly refreshed at finding their child, not only so much recovered, but so blessedly improved in his mental state; and it added to their joy to find the whole family so deeply interested upon the most important of all subjects, that it seemed to

engross the chief part of their attention. When he heard his children conversing with Mr. Arlington and Leighton, upon the joy of living exclusively to God, and the necessity of avoiding sinful conformity with the spirit and manners of the world, good Mr. Villeroi was often heard to sigh, and reproach himself for not having acted faithfully in this respect, and guided his conduct by his light and convictions.

“Well, my dear children,” said he one day, “it is never too late to begin; the past time of my life may suffice, in which I have complied too much with the worldly habits and examples of others. I have been, perhaps, myself an abettor of worldliness, by being appealed to as a standard for Christian conduct. I would now not only encourage, but set out with you in a narrower and holier path, convinced that we but half enjoy our privileges, while we give our Lord but half the heart. I fear that I did not act faithfully enough by you, my dear children. I did not guard you from temptations; I calculated too little upon the natural delight of the heart in objects of sense, and its distaste for the things of God; and therefore did not remember that, if the one was not sedulously watched against, and the other as sedulously cultivated, the consequence would be, that the sensual nature would gain the victory.”

“Ah! dear father,” said Henry, “the blame was *mine*! I was self-ignorant and self-sufficient. The lessons I heard from you and my mother ought to have led me into prayer and watchfulness. I was taught to look into my Bible for the standard of truth, and

there I should have sought my examples, instead of looking round me at the conduct of others. Of what avail would it be to any of us to plead the sin or negligence of another, as an excuse for our own, when we possess the word of God for our rule and guide.

"But there are some characters very easily moulded by human influence," remarked Leighton. "There is a softness, an amiability about them, that renders them anxious to please, and reluctant to differ from others. Such persons I am inclined to pity more than to blame, for their inconsistency is more the result of circumstances than deliberate choice."

"I would not deal with the evil so gently, my friend," replied Henry. "This amiable desire to please is often nothing more than a weak and puerile anxiety for human approbation, forgetful of the favour of God. If I please men, says the Apostle, I am not the servant of Christ; for, to have the favour of two opposites is totally incompatible. For my own part, I know that *my amiability*, if such it could be called, arose from pure vanity and selfishness. I liked to please, when it gave me no trouble, no self-denial; this was the case when I lived at home, and after I came to London; but, dear Leighton, to be candid, I used to find it rather troublesome to please you, and often failed in the attempt."

Leighton smiled.

Henry continued: "Every thing went smooth with me till I became acquainted with you. Then,

first, I discovered, that to be a Christian, self was to be mortified, and the cross taken up; that amusement, and excitement, and self-gratification, were the ingredients of *my* religious profession, and that if *yours* was real, mine was but the offspring of imagination.

“When I went to Lilybrook I was completely out of my depth. The world *above* had too much to do with all the arrangements of the family to make me feel at ease. All your amusements had a holy character; all your excitements were to urge the soul heavenward. In going there I had not much idea of a domestic circle so constituted; and I found myself weary and uneasy in the constant atmosphere of religious service, forgetting that the very same thing would have made me unhappy in heaven, where they cease not, day and night, adoring and enjoying God, as their centre of all joy.

“But, as usual in such cases, I did not perceive that the evil lay in my own heart; I blamed the over-strictness of the system, and though I truly loved and respected every member of the family, I was not displeased to get a summons to return.

“The events that followed I need hardly allude to: I will only say that, in London particularly, I found a system of religious profession much more suited to my taste, and easier to comply with. I fell into it without a moment's struggle: and this convinces me that I must have been then wholly unconverted, or the new heart would, at least, have

sustained a conflict, before it yielded. Dont you think so, father ?”

“ I do, my son,” replied Mr. Villeroi : “ but tell me all, for it interests me deeply.”

“ After a little while,” continued Henry, “ I went a step farther—‘*facilis descensus averni.*’ My heart became very cold and indifferent on the subject of religion ; but I was not conscious of its coldness, for I was now a mere formalist. I read the Bible, and prayed, as usual, but it was without life or energy. My thoughts never accompanied what I said ; and, worst of all, I did not even lament this deadness ; it gave me no concern.”

“ That was, indeed, the worst symptom,” said his father ; “ for when our coldness and deadness of heart is a source of real pain and grief, it is a sign that we are not as wholly cold and dead as we fear.”

The tears started into Mrs. Vincent’s eyes.

“ Oh ! do you say so ?” said she ; “ then I may have *some hope*, for often, often do I almost despair of my own case, seeing how hard I find it to pray spiritually and perseveringly.”*

* “ A poor soul may say : ‘ Oh ! prayer to me is lifeless labour. I am only a speaking carcass before the Lord ; I am wholly dead ; I have no spirit of prayer ; no access with boldness and confidence to the Majesty on high.’

“ These very complaints are proofs, that thou knowest what *no one but a believer* can know, viz : the difference of addressing God from behind a cloud, and when he unveils his face, and shines with full lustre upon the soul. Press on,

“Ah! never despair,” cried Henry, “never despair; no cause for giving up while sin is a burden, our flesh a burden, our carnal heart and earthly affections a burden. It is only when we walk at ease, under all these deadly symptoms, that the case is desperate indeed. I would not particularize individuals, or condemn them; but it was this walking at ease, under circumstances that I knew were decidedly unchristian, which injured my principles so much, and made me, at length, almost doubt if there was, or need be, any difference between the believer and the man of the world. The frivolous idle conversation of some; the anxiety for pre-eminence in others; the vanity and display; the evident enjoyment in things purely sensual in their nature; the hasty, unchristian tempers; the fretfulness of spirit under trifling annoyances; the anxiety and emulation about matters of no moment; betrayed, more or less, by so many, really led me into the conclusion that, either the commands in the Bible could be explained away, in a manner quite foreign from their original import, or that religion itself was a system of delusions.

“I tremble when I utter it, but at times thoughts very like infidelity floated across my mind. Oh! the infinite love and goodness of the Lord, to snatch

then, though it be in the dark: soon shall the Sun of Righteousness arise, with healing under his wings.”—HILL'S DEEP THINGS OF GOD.

me from such peril, and reveal his glorious truth to me."

Such was part of one of the many conversations which Henry held with his delighted friends. Mr. Vincent was not unfrequently present, and occasionally joined in with a remark: a circumstance not usual with him, unless much interested; for he was rather silent and reserved in his habits. Henry's energy of character was of great use to him; it stimulated his feeble and wavering conclusions: his mind suggested a thousand difficulties in cases where Henry anticipated none; and thus he felt himself compelled, as it were, to act, and surprised into an effectual step, before he had time to deliberate. Henry's missionary spirit did not forsake him in the new aspect of his religious principles; but it became more immediately operative, and less romantic. Instead of speculating exclusively upon distant scenes of usefulness, he began to consider what he could do at home; how he could rouse the souls within his reach; how he could glorify God and benefit others in the very circle wherein he now moved. Mr. Vincent's spirit shrunk when Henry mentioned his determination of immediately announcing, to all his circle of friends, his change of views, and resolution to live for eternity: he said he meant to begin with Penruddock.

"Take care," said Mr. Vincent, "of discouraging or terrifying him. You may go too far, and thus drive him from the sphere of your influence."

"My brother," said Henry, "I will pray for the spirit of judgment, and the spirit of meekness; but the Lord himself has taught me that nothing is to be won by *indecision*; and through his grace I am determined to devote myself to him, and to *him only*. For, what should it profit me, were I to gain the whole world, and lose my own soul?"

Henry's health was improving fast, but his constitution seemed a good deal impaired; and Doctor Chartres recommended him strongly to go to the country, at least for some time. Mr. and Mrs. Villeroi wished him to return to Brighton; but Leighton urged earnestly the claims of Lilybrook. Henry smiled sweetly at Leighton when he spoke to him of that blessed home. "Ah!" said he, "what a privilege to go there!" His mind, indeed, seemed so much inclined to this latter place, that this would probably have been the arrangement, had not Mrs. Vincent suggested another. Anxious to break through their present mode of life, and not knowing well how to accomplish it, she and Mr. Vincent proposed to remove from their present residence, and take a house in the country; to prevail on Henry and his father and mother to go with them, and to obtain, if possible, the company of Miss Percy and Theophilus Leighton. The plan was scarcely mentioned when it received the joyful consent of all parties present, and Leighton promised to use his influence with his aunt, to persuade her to concur also. Accordingly, a convenient house was soon found, in the county of Kent, situated in a beautiful and healthful part

of the country. Nor was its picturesque beauty, or advantageous site the only recommendation, for it was in the immediate neighbourhood and under the pastoral charge of a devoted Christian minister. Mrs. Vincent and Henry rejoiced very much in this important advantage, and with glad hearts prepared for a removal from London.

It was not found an easy thing to induce Miss Percy to leave her beloved Lilybrook, and her arduous duties there; though but for a short period. however, Leighton represented Mrs. Vincent's character in such an interesting point of view, that she at length consented to pay a visit for a little while.

The party was now complete, and truly happy in one another's society. Released from the interference and thralldom of other habits and manners, they were enabled to select their own plans, and act upon them with quiet consistency. The consequence was soon perceived in the calm happiness that pervaded their dwelling, and the reformed air, and moral improvement of their whole domestic establishment. The servants partook of all these advantages, and began to inquire into the nature of religion, and to believe in its reality.

But it is time to hasten the conclusion of this narrative. Months rolled on, and the period for Leighton to leave his native country and go forth upon his destined mission had arrived. This event was looked forward to with much pain by Henry, as he was yet too young to accompany him. Leighton was not without his feeling of natural

sorrow also, but he no longer felt apprehension ; he saw that his friend's principles and affections were now firmly fixed upon the Rock, even Christ, and therefore he was confident that he would be preserved, and enabled to stand fast.

Henry being no longer a visionary, but a practical Christian, though with unabated ardour ; had many conversations with Leighton respecting his future destiny, before the latter departed for Calcutta. Upon much mature thought and earnest prayer, they both seemed to think his way was not very clear for becoming a foreign missionary, and that he might be equally useful, happy, and devoted to the Lord, by giving himself to the ministerial work at home. The parents of the two friends, who were also consulted on the subject, fully concurred in these views ; though both Mr. and Mrs. Villeroi declared they could not utter one word of dissuasion, if his conscience and duty required his departure. It did not appear to Leighton that his friend's physical temperament was adapted to sustain the hardships of a foreign station ; especially since his late illness, which had materially shaken his constitution. A slight degree of over fatigue, or an unusually warm day, were apt to exhaust his strength and spirits so much, that it would have been complete waste of life to have encouraged him to persevere in his first purpose ; and the object of preaching the Gospel would scarcely be attained by him in any degree, before his health would be destroyed. On the contrary, it was thought that the duties of a country parish would be

exactly suited to his abilities both of body and mind, and give him full occupation, and delightful opportunities of calling lost souls to repent and believe. Henry did not at first like this change of plan, but the newly-acquired meekness of his spirit enabled him to be convinced, and to submit. Accordingly, arrangements were made for completing his classical education, and obtaining his entrance into the church. As soon as he was of a proper age, he entreated the elder Mr. Leighton to allow him to act as his assistant curate without salary, for one year at least, whenever he should be ordained, a request which the good man willingly agreed to grant, in case Henry should live through the few intervening years, and claim the promise, and that he should yet be living and able to fulfil it. All these arrangements were made previous to the embarkation of Theophilus, who, though leaving his beloved friends with regret, yet, rejoiced in leaving them doing the work of the Lord, and seeking to know his will. He also rejoiced in being so near the accomplishment of what had long been the secret and ardent wish of his heart, namely, to be engaged in the wide and unploughed field of missionary labour. His heart panted for the work ; he considered himself as the Lord's hired servant in this particular department ; and the days seemed long which passed over, without its being yet begun.

Leighton took leave of all his other friends at home, but his father and Henry accompanied him to the ship. As they were going along, he turned to his

young friend, and said, "My dearest Henry, I have but one word more to say to you, because I think I know your constitution of body and mind better than any other human being. I have watched over you with intense interest for a long time, and have observed the peculiarities of your disposition; and would now mention a change of feeling, to which you may be liable, and which may alarm you if you have no friend at hand to explain its phenomena. You are now in the enjoyment of all the happy and delightful sensations which generally accompany the first stages of Christian progress, when the eyes are opened to new scenes, and the heart to new affections; but you have still to advance through a critical period of your course, when you pass from the first stage of excitement and feeling, wherein religion is a new state of existence, to the next, in which excitement subsides; and faith is put to the trial. You may then have to walk in partial darkness, and pursue your way on principle only, independent of feeling. Where the excitement has been great, as was the case with you, dear friend, it is possible you may find its withdrawal sudden, and the loss may be felt so severely as to cause your mind to recoil back upon itself, and doubt the reality of your former experience. But then turn you to the strong hold, to Him whose kingdom is *within*, not *without* you; cast yourself upon Him in your darkness and apparent desertion, believingly, trustingly, lovingly; and He will then manifest Himself to you as he does not to the world, and confirm to you the possession of that ever-

lasting peace which does not depend on circumstances. The Lord will then lead you on, in his school, to deeper exercises and higher attainments. He will deal with you in proportion to the strength of *employed* faith. The weak faith of a beginner ventures partly on what it sees and feels, and partly on God's promises. The strong faith of advanced believers feeds on invisible things, and ventures, not merely on *improbabilities*, but what, in human estimation, we deem *impossibilities*."

"Thank you, my dear kind friend and guide," said Henry, while his eyes glistened with repressed feeling. "Your experience and advice, and Christian friendship, has hitherto been the greatest blessing of my life; and much do I value every hint, and trust I shall keep what you say in remembrance. You must write to me, and pray for me, beloved Theophilus. Oh! what do I not already owe to your love and your prayers. I feel as if we did not *really* separate in this farewell. We are one in the Lord Jesus."

"Yes," added Leighton's father, joining their hands, and pressing them together, "*members of his mystical body, of his flesh and of his bones*, nothing can separate those from one another, who meet in Christ."

"I would say a thousand things to you, Henry, *my own son in the Gospel*," added Theophilus impressively, and with strong feeling and faltering tone, "but I feel it is unnecessary, for the Lord Jesus is by his Spirit dwelling in your heart; he is the source

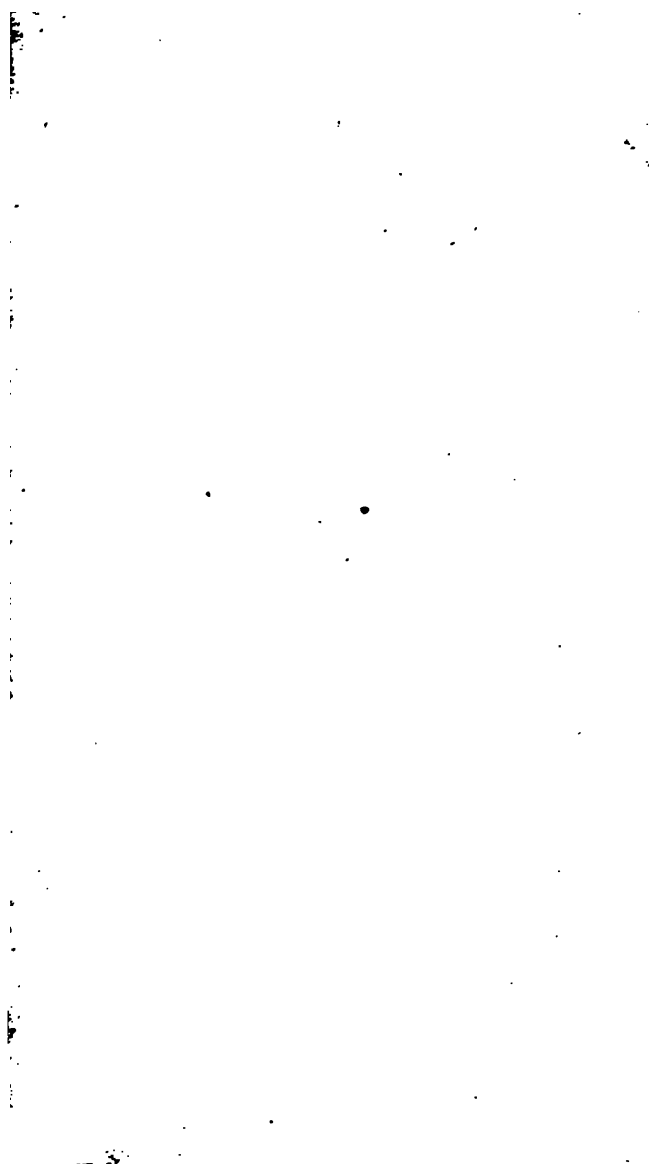
of your spiritual life; yes, the very *life* itself; not a mere model for imitation; all moral virtue, all divine strength flows hence; therefore, fix on Him all the powers of your soul. Cultivate an intimacy with Him in holy retirement. Pray that your capacity may be enlarged to enjoy him; attend to the inward impressions of his voice, and then your outward course will be consistent, without constraint; will be obedient to the divine law, without being in legal bondage; for you will be acted upon by the spirit and character of Him, who said, '*I delight to do thy will, O God; yea, thy law is within my heart.*'"

They were now at the shore where Theophilus was to embark; the boat was waiting; it was full of passengers, missionaries and their families, going to be employed in the same blessed service.

Henry and Mr. Leighton would have accompanied them to the vessel, had there been room in the boat; but seeing that this would be inconvenient and almost impracticable, they gave it up, and were obliged to take a hasty adieu upon the shore. Much more was felt on all sides than could be expressed. They scarcely looked at one another, for fear of opening the flood-gate of bursting affections. A wringing of hands, twice, thrice repeated, and a fervent blessing uttered mutually by father and son, were all that passed between Leighton and his father; but Henry uttered no word till just at the last moment. When his friend was stepping into the boat, he threw himself into his arms, and wept like a child. Poor Theophilus's assumed firmness forsook him; not-

withstanding the presence of strangers, his tears would not be restrained, and for a moment or two he quite forgot himself. But Mr. Leighton now summoned all his fortitude, and separating the attached friends, made a sign for the boat to move off. . He then took Henry by the arm, and supported him while they both watched the heaving of the white waves, which carried away the beloved object out of sight. No sooner, however, had the boat cleared the shore, than the missionary party commenced a sweet and animating hymn, which floated softly over the undulating waters, and carried a soothing influence to the hearts of those left behind. It gave the impression that they felt they were going forth in faith, upon a hallowed employment, and that they feared nothing in sure dependence upon the promises and faithfulness of a divine guide, and counted it a joy and an honour to forsake all the world would call valuable, that they might glorify their Master, and do the work of angels—publish the glad tidings of his salvation to the ends of the earth.

THE END.



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